SPECIAL ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 18, 1978 $1.00

THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

NewTimes

alaska

ELEVENTH HOUR FOR AMERICA'S WILDERNESS

BY MICHAEL PARFIT

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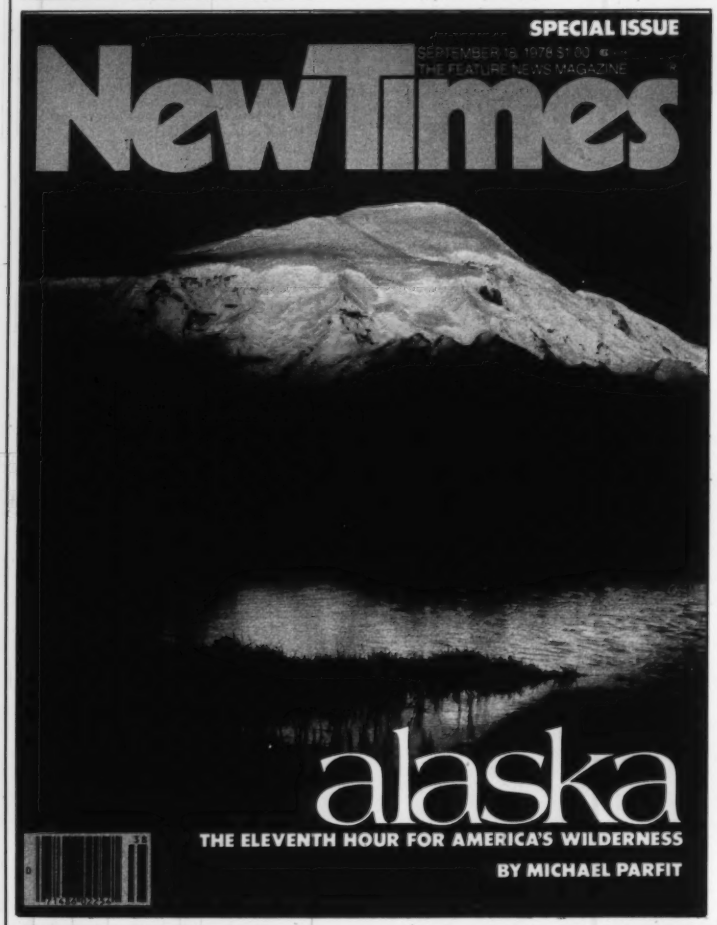

On the Cover:

18 "People have a pretty romantic notion about Alaska," says Michael Parfit, who wrote this issue's cover story. "For instance, they think it's horribly dangerous to fly a plane around up there. But it isn't any different from flying the Rockies."

Parfit knows about flying the Rockies; he lives in nearby Idaho and often takes to the western skies in his four-passenger Cessna Cardinal. When it came time to research the Alaska story, Parfit ripped out the plane's back seat (to make room for backpacks and sleeping bags) and headed north across Canada with his 16-year-old friend Scott Evans.

All told, on that trip and two others, Parfit spent about two months in Alaska. He passed some nights in cheap hotels in Anchorage, but most of them camping out around the state, giving him a close look at Alaska's famous mosquitoes: "They were like a little curtain in front of the tent, like a buzzing haze. But the most difficult thing about camping was that it never got dark. I'd wake up and the sun would be shining and I'd say, 'Gosh, I gotta be going.' But it would be 2 a.m." When his research was finished, Parfit had about 120 pounds of documents and interview notes—a payload that made taking off in the light plane more of an adventure than usual.

This is the second time Parfit has written a special issue for *New Times*; the first, "America's New Poor" (*NT*, 7/25/75), was nominated for a National Magazine Award. Once again we think he has told a compelling story—and told it with insight and engaging gentleness.

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Americana/by T. D. Allman

GUANTANAMO: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba—A homecoming queen in a strapless formal; Fourth of July fireworks under tropical skies. A dress code, sternly enforced, at the officers' club swimming pool. On the front page of the *Guantanamo Gazette*, a banner headline reading "Reflections on Freedom." Teenagers in hot rods restlessly tooling up and down a main street that, a dozen or so miles beyond a lightly guarded fence, leads to a base for Soviet MIGs. Women in hair curlers buying frozen food in an air-conditioned supermarket; a golf course overlooking the hills where the Western Hemisphere's only successful guerilla war began. Cuban troops watching through binoculars as Americans barbecue hamburgers on the beach. Russian freighters sailing by crew-cut kids fly casting into the sea.

Fittingly enough, one reaches America's most bizarre (if hardly most vital) overseas military installation by riding backwards in a windowless Air Force transport plane. It might as well be a time machine; the three-hour flight from Virginia to the 45-square-mile U.S. enclave on the southwestern shore of "Castroland" is a journey back to a simpler time.

Picture *American Graffiti* transported to the foot of the Sierra Maestra and you have "Gitmo." That is what Americans have been calling the place ever since 1903, when Teddy Roosevelt took Guantanamo the way he took Panama—in one of his periodic spasms of jingoism.

In the intervening 75 years, the strategic value placed on Guantanamo has reflected prevailing military fashion in Washington rather than the base's own assets and liabilities. There is not a drop of water to drink here, and the place is virtually indefensible against overland attack. Then there is the historical reality that Guantanamo Bay, for all the saber rattling the Caribbean has seen from the days of the buccaneers to the Cuban missile crisis, never really has conferred on its possessors any decisive advantage.

For the tens of thousands of American servicemen stationed here in the 1950s, the adjoining Cuban towns of Caimanera and Boqueron—offering 10-cent rum and two-dollar senoritas—were of far more concern that the insurrection simmering in the nearby Sierra Maestra. At Gitmo's northeast gate, MPs dispensed penicillin to off-duty sailors. But inside the 17.4-mile-long chain link fence separating the American base from Batista's Cuba, it was a different kind of life: garden parties and military protocol; white starched uniforms and afternoons wiled away on the tennis court; waiters in white coats mixing American Coca-Cola and Cuban rum in the colonial-style officers' club.

By the mid-1950s, the Pentagon was considering phasing out the base. What use was a coaling station for war ships, and Guantanamo's propeller-length landing field, in an age of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers?

Then came Castro, the Bay of Pigs, the missile crisis. Overnight Gitmo became yet another place that, whatever its intrinsic irrelevance, the Kennedy Administration was determined to maintain as a front-line position in the defense of freedom. Wives and children were flown out; reinforcements were hurried in; a new airfield was built for jet transports and fighters. U.S. forces ringed the base with the world's largest minefield; today it still claims the life of an occasional American stray. Lest the communists cut off Guantanamo's water supply—piped in from a nearby Cuban river—the Navy installed a $10-million desalination plant. At $7 per 1,000 gallons, officials say that Guantanamo still has the most expensive drinking water in the world.

Gitmo: *American Graffiti* in Cuba?

The communist assault never came. The Cold War melodramas served chiefly to provide, once again, a lesson in the base's isolation from the events unfolding around it. The U.S. military presence in Guantanamo did not stop Cuba from going communist; nor did communist rule in Havana impede U.S. operations. Indeed, Guantanamo suggests an odd theorum of international politics. These days, as the recent Panama Canal treaties show, even two-bit, right-wing, drug-dealing dictators can make Uncle Sam pull down the flag. But the Western Hemisphere's only communist nation seems willing to tolerate a U.S. base on its soil indefinitely—partly, intelligence sources suggest, to avoid having to give it to the Russians.

So little tension is there in Gitmo these days that most of the Marine sentry posts along the base's perimeter are manned only intermittently. Just beyond the low-lying American fence, the Cuban barbed wire is rusting.

Guantanamo once again has about it the air of a place that not just time but the Joint Chiefs themselves seem to have forgotten. As many as 18,000 Americans once lived here; today there are slightly more than 5,000. The number of Cubans who work on the base has dwindled to a few hundred—134 who still commute daily from "Castroland," and a number of Cuban "exiles" who came to work one day and never went home. Seven hundred Jamaicans have been imported from Kingston, a half-hour flight away, to tend bar and cut lawns.

"But what is that in comparison to the good old days?" an American who has lived here nearly 30 years recently lamented. "Why, I recall when we had 500 gardeners alone. Today," she added, "they only let you water the lawn for half an hour a day." Old-timers here fondly remember the days when a full-fledged admiral commanded the base; now it is a mere captain. Today the main enemy at Guantanamo is boredom, not international communism. Marijuana, not Cuban saboteurs, poses the greatest security threat. If there is a subversive force at work here, it is the nagging suspicion that not just Fidel Castro but the folks back home hardly give a damn about

Photograph by Jim Moore/Liaison

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the place.

Sources in Washington suggest that the Pentagon once again is dusting off its evacuation plans. The theory is that, as Cuba and the U.S. move toward full diplomatic relations, the base can be used to bargain Castro into more "responsible" policies in Africa and elsewhere. But the Cubans refuse to nibble at the bait. American diplomats say the question never was raised in U.S.-Cuban negotiations, and Castro has not even mentioned the base in more than two years. Every year the U.S. Treasury continues to deposit a rent check in a Cuban bank account in Switzerland—where, like all but two of the others issued since Castro won power, it lies uncashed. From the flash point that might have sparked World War III, Gitmo has degenerated into a geopolitical curiosity: the only American military base in a communist country.

This probably explains why a certain boosterism, reminiscent of those brochures produced by the Jaycees in small towns with obsolete factories, tends to inform the claims made both for Gitmo's military significance and its quality of life.

If Guantanamo is a tropical paradise, as the press information kit maintains, it is a paradise with sharks in the bay, with poisonous sea urchins in the ocean, with sandless beaches and rocks so sharp one must wear tennis shoes when swimming. Nor is the base the uniquely valuable training ground for tropical warfare that is often claimed: Too much of it is littered with land mines for large-scale maneuvers. And Guantanamo is so dry—cactus grows everywhere—that it hardly duplicates the battlefield conditions found in the tropical rain forests elsewhere in the Caribbean. Far from being a "base," Gitmo is entirely dependent on incoming ships and planes for everything from ordnance to beer. Even the few fresh vegetables available must be flown in from Norfolk, Virginia, 1,500 miles away. The base's main function seems not to support the Navy but to provide the National Security Agency a base for spying on Cuba.

Local officials steer visitors away from the electronic sensoring stations, refuse to answer questions about them, and forbid photographs of them. These precautions hardly seem necessary. Scores of Russian and Cuban ships sail through the base every year on their way to a Cuban sugar port further upstream; both the Cubans and Russians no doubt already know all they want to about the base's activities. In espionage as well as military terms, Guantanamo seems a liability at worst, an irrelevancy at best.

I left Guantanamo—still riding backwards—feeling something else about the place, but I couldn't put my finger on it until I returned to the United States. It was then that I realized the return journey from Gitmo to the mainland reminded me of a trip I once made to Lisbon from Macao, the tiny Portuguese enclave on the south coast of China which the communists have refused to take back. When I reached Portugal, my initial reaction was that the country was somehow so much less Portuguese than that distant relic of empire I had left behind.

Guantanamo is like that too. Where else do Marine colonels still look like Spencer Tracy, and school kids call strangers "sir" and salute the flag as it passes on the Fourth of July? One night, at one of those many clubs where the Americans fight boredom with endless cold cans of beer, with endless quarters dropped into juke boxes, a T-bone steak and baked potato and iceberg lettuce salad with blue cheese dressing were placed on the formica-topped table in front of me. I felt for the first time what Andy Warhol must have felt when he decided he had no alternative but to paint a Campbells soup can. It wasn't a meal there on the table; it was the distillation of a kind of civilization.

At the Fourth of July Coronation Ball, the crowd feasted on fried chicken while the band played the Bee Gees and other almost-current hits. But hearts were reserved for a country 'n' western song. "Take That Job And Stuff It," the refrain went. The crowd cheered and applauded and stomped and gave Dixie whistles.

But by midnight, they had begun to disappear—back into those American-style ranch houses with jalousied windows and car ports, somehow planted on the Cuban shore; into those silent, neat-as-a-pin little neighborhoods where at night one hears the buzz of the air conditioner, the rumble of the color TV, but finds no one outside looking up at those amazing tropical stars.

The residents of Guantanamo might have sung along to a refrain of mild discontent at night, but the next morning there was that daily infinity of papers to shuffle; those barracks to be cleaned once again; certain permanent hierarchical verities to acknowledge, and obey. The old conventional wisdom was that communism, if we let it take over a country like Cuba, would imperil our own Americanism. But at Guantanamo one finds quite a different result. Here, like a fly in amber—like an ordinary house plant in a most extraordinary hot house—has been preserved an American Way of Life one can't find, even in America, any more. ●

Party Lines/by Robert Shrum

THE SPEECH CARTER SHOULD GIVE

In June, White House media adviser Gerald Rafshoon jokingly asked Bob Shrum if he'd write a speech for the President. The editors of New Times *liked the idea, too, and here is Shrum's draft.*

Two years ago, at Franklin Roosevelt's home in Warm Springs, Georgia, I began my 1976 general election campaign in the belief that we Americans could "do better"—that we could "achieve once again a nation of faith and vision, of courage and greatness."

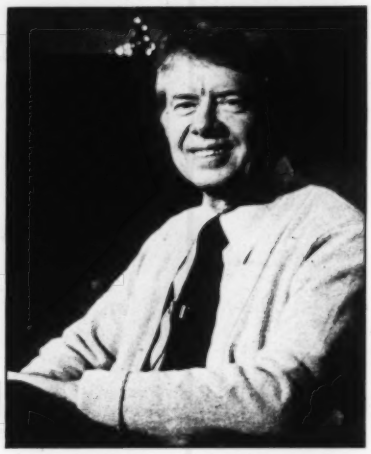
Tonight I want to talk with you about how we have done since then—about the state of the nation, and the successes and the shortcomings of this Administration.

First of all, let me be candid about the mistakes I have made. I came to this office from among you, not from the ranks of Washington insiders; I did not deal as usual with Congress. I was not firm enough with my appointees. I have not fully exercised the Presidency's powers of communication and persuasion.

It is not an easy thing for an Administration to admit its errors, but it is essential to leadership in an Administration that it can—and that it can learn from them. I think that we have learned how to bargain responsibly and realistically, to lead and to legislate on difficult issues. We have done important things right.

It was right to propose and to pass an economic stimulus package last year, to provide work instead of welfare in the form of 725,000 federally funded jobs in local community service. Since January 1977, the number of jobs has increased by six million, the largest gain of any 18-month period in American history. In the same period, the rate of unemployment has fallen to the lowest level in four years.

It was right to seek and secure authority to reorganize the federal bureaucracy. A year ago, we established a single Energy Department to replace a series of fragmented, overlapping agencies that had given our nation an energy non-policy and left our economy unconserving of resources and unprepared for shortages. This August, the Senate approved my program to reform the civil service, so that incompetent officials will no longer be



entrenched in their jobs. Our continuing effort can free government from the impacted ice of its own inefficiency.

We have ventured much in Congress, and we have lost sometimes. The Speaker of the House compared this Administration's legislative record after one year to the First Hundred Days of the New Deal. This praise was no doubt too generous, but I am proud of the progress that we have made. It would be more than enough in ordinary times, but this is a time of more than ordinary crisis. We all can sense the crisis better than we can say what it is. It involves many challenges all at once; it demands deep commitments to different causes. Set before us is a long backlog of unfinished public business—health care, inflation control, the condition of our cities and the possibility of limiting strategic weapons and preserving the nuclear peace. We also face an unprecedented number of emerging problems—the end of a period of endless energy, the evolution of a new world economy, the definition of an appropriate American role abroad that avoids both indiscriminate involvement and heedless isolationism. The difficulties have come on many fronts, but the crisis comes down to one fundamental question: Can our government still work for the people and to fulfill great national purposes?

I do not fear that question; I sought the Presidency in order to answer it. I did not believe in 1976, and I do not believe now, that the failures of the past must be the prologue of our future. I believe now as I did then that we can do better. But in two years here in Washington, I have seen the influence of those who are more interested in doing well for themselves. These special interests have delayed, diluted, and defeated the agenda of progress.

They have opposed public financing of congressional elections—the one measure that could break the hold of organized money over national politics. Unfree enterprise in every field clings to excessive government regulation in order to prevent competition and lower prices. Corporate lobbies blocked legislation to protect consumers. Now the political agents of the oil companies have joined an attempt to reject a compromise on natural gas prices. The Energy Department estimates that industry overcharges for oil and gas, in violation of federal controls, may have exceeded $5 billion between 1973 and 1976. The oil companies want more, ever more, always more.

Four decades ago, confronting similar "forces of privilege," Franklin Roosevelt restated the reforms of the New Deal and promised the American people: "For all these things, we have only just begun to fight." Today, for all those things that we have promised, we, too, have only just begun to fight. We will fight in the Congress, in public forums across the country, in the midterm elections this November, and in the 1980 presidential campaign.

We will fight for both lower and fairer federal taxes. This January, I sent the Congress a proposal to reform taxes, for example, by closing the loophole for lavish business entertainment at public expense. Yet the bill that emerged from the House would continue to force you to pay for the lunches of $200,000-a-year executives. Many of these executives spend more in restaurants annually than the average family earns in wages. In the guise of tax reduction for the middle class, the House has given us "the millionaire's tax relief act." In fact, at every income level up to $50,000, the Administration's bill would provide larger tax cuts than the House version. The House took from the poor and the middle class, from all of you with incomes of ten or twenty or forty thousand dollars, and transferred the benefits to those apparently needy souls earning over $100,000 a year.

I did not become President in order to preside over the old deal of tax loopholes masquerading as tax reform. I will veto the House tax bill or any similar legislation that offers the most to those who are least in need. I will send real tax reform to Congress again in 1979—and again in 1980—

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17-22	.27	.14	.17	.10	.10	.06	.80	1.80
23-30	.31	.18	.20	.12	.12	.08	1.00	2.00
31-40	.35	.21	.22	.14	.14	.09	1.10	2.10
41-55	.39	.25	.25	.17	.15	.10	1.35	2.35
56-70	.41	.27	.26	.18	.16	.11	1.60	2.60
71-124	.43	.29	.27	.19	.17	.12	1.75	2.75
125-196	.44	.30	.28	.20	.17	.12	1.85	2.85
197-292	.46	.32	.29	.21	.18	.13	1.95	2.95
293-430	.48	.34	.31	.23	.19	.14	2.00	3.05
431-925	.50	.34	.32	.23	.20	.14	2.05	3.15
926-1910	.52	.36	.33	.24	.20	.15	2.15	3.30
1911-3000	.54	.38	.35	.25	.21	.16	2.25	3.55

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Bell System

and again after that, until it finally passes.

For this year, I will continue to fight for a reasonable tax cut of $19 billion that will not compound the disgrace of our tax system; but I will not repeat the easy overpromise of others that federal income taxes can be quickly cut by $100 billion. The slogan may be good politics, but the reality would be bad economics: The advocates of this ill-conceived cut fail to say how they would pay the bill.

The opportunities of politicians and the responsibilities of a President are very different. I cannot tell you that you can have a third of your federal taxes back by fiscal magic, at a single stroke, without damaging either the national security or the economy. A cut of that size now would set inflation blasting through every commodity; every dollar you saved in taxes would be consumed in higher prices.

Instead of fueling inflation, this Administration will continue the fight to control it. We are cutting the federal deficit by $3 billion; we have cut scheduled pay increases in the government. We have asked those who set prices and wages in the marketplace for similar restraint. We have patiently pursued this policy of informal cooperation; but too many have flagrantly abused it as a license for excess profits and income. Consumer prices continue to increase at an intolerable rate.

Therefore, I have decided to establish specific guidelines for wage and price increases. They will be voluntary, but I will speak out firmly against violators. And I will propose that tax cuts in 1979 go to companies and unions that stay within the guidelines.

In one area, health care, I have asked Congress for mandatory cost controls. The typical Blue Cross-Blue Shield bill is now $750 a year. Without cost controls, the average family will pay an extra $200 annually due to medical inflation. But under pressure from the medical establishment, the House Commerce Committee rejected the Administration's proposal. If you want to save that $200, write your representatives and senators now, urging them to approve cost controls—to limit the price that can be put on your family's health and on life itself.

The most dominant of all special interests, the hardest to fight and to defeat, are those who argue for and profit from excess military spending. Last month, I vetoed an appropriations bill that would have wasted $2 billion on a needless nuclear aircraft carrier. Here more dollars would have bought less defense. The money for the carrier came from other, essential parts of the budget for national security. Funds to strengthen NATO would have been cut; so would appropriations to keep our military equipment in fighting condition.

Some commentators have suggested that my popularity would rise with a defense build-up or a foreign confrontation. What would they suggest—that I risk the peace for a few points in the polls? I would rather be a one-term President than the last President of the United States.

In 1963, John Kennedy said he would be willing to lose the next election for the sake of the nuclear test ban treaty. I would be willing to lose in 1980 for the sake of an effective arms control agreement with the Soviet Union. Such an agreement would spare America $75 billion of additional spending over 5 years. It would lessen the threat of third and final world war.

As President, I will never neglect our national strength; our defense is, and it will remain, second to none. There are simplistic voices telling Americans that we have to be afraid. On the Panama Canal Treaty and on arms control, they seem to want issues, not answers; this Administration wants to keep the peace.

Today, two years after my campaign, I am proud of the purposes for which we have exercised our power, confident of our skill in the future—and determined to do more, and to do better.

We have been told that we have already asked for too much. But is it too much to ask that in America the amount of a family's wealth should not determine the state of their health?

Is it too much to ask that the economy should offer work at decent wages instead of a dole?

Is it too much to ask that taxes should be conserved—and that these imperatives should not become the pawns of selfish interests?

Is it too much to ask that we should prefer arms control for peace rather than an arms race toward war?

Much of this—and more—could be accomplished soon, during the first term of this Administration. And for all of it, we have only just begun to fight.

After the years of war and Watergate, of precious things lost, we have the burden and the privilege of restoring the capacity of this nation's self-government.

Let us reject the despair of democracy that seeks only what each of us can get for self. Let us keep the faith that it matters what all of us together will give to society.

In that mutual faith, without expecting instant success, but never accepting initial defeats as final, we shall ultimately prevail in the great battles for progress of our generation. ●

ADDENDUM & ERRATUM

Have A Nice Flight. In his story "Out of Control" (*NT*, 8/5/77), David Martindale wrote about the extraordinary pressure that air traffic controllers face, and how they cope with it (or fail to). For example, Martindale quoted one controller's estimate that at least 20 percent of the 338 men then working in the Chicago center had serious drinking problems. "Yet, officially," Martindale wrote, "the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington pooh-poohs the idea that there's any cause for alarm." He quoted one FAA doctor who said, "Drinking is no greater a problem for controllers than it is with the general population."

That may have been wishful thinking. The Boston University School of Medicine has just released a detailed study of 416 controllers that shows more than half of them are heavy drinkers off the job—"a rate," says a summary of the report, "one-and-a-half to two times as high as that found in surveys of the white, male population in the Northeast," where the study was performed.

The report also found that the controllers under study tended to have "significant difficulties in controlling anger and anti-social impulses," and had two to four times as much high blood pressure as the general population. The report recommends that the FAA, among other things, experiment with the teaching of relaxation or biofeedback techniques to controllers who have highly variable blood pressure.

Wild World of Sports. Readers of our "Wild In The Stands" cover story (*NT*, 11/11/77) might be interested in this update from Madison Square Garden: On August 25, after a particularly controversial decision in a middleweight boxing match, angry fans pelted the ring with liquor bottles. When they ran out of bottles, they threw chairs, and some fans stormed the ring. (Newsmen and ringsiders took cover under tables.) Guns were waved (though no shots were fired) and when the dust had settled, about a dozen people needed treatment for minor injuries. Security guards, our correspondent reports, "were conspicuous by their total absence. The fans quickly became a drunken, out-of-control mob, knowing they could do anything they wanted until the police arrived, which took a considerable time." ●

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NEW TIMES exposed the dubious wit and wisdom of Earl Butz, costing the Secretary of Agriculture his job and possibly Jerry Ford the '76 election.

NEW TIMES alone bothered to interview SLA leaders William and Emily Harris in their jail cells during the Patty Hearst trial, coming up with testimony that blew Patty's defense to bits and led to her conviction.

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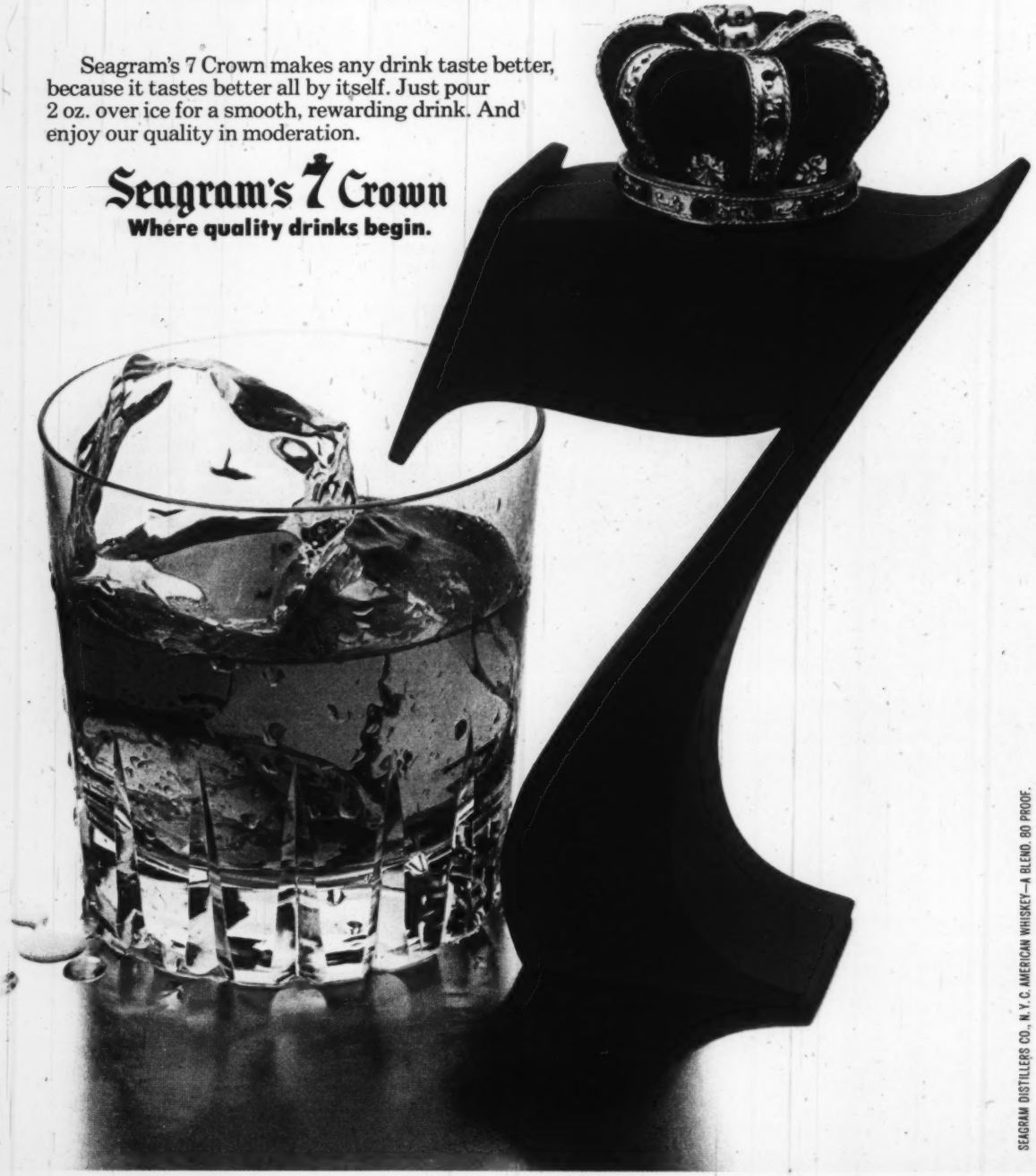

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"The thesis I found hardest to live with was the one on religious freedom."—Pope John Paul I

The Insider

No pleas, just send money

Brown GOP Foe Touts Crime Fighter Image but Can't Shed Mob Link

Unable to compete with Jerry Brown's glamorous media image, California GOP gubernatorial hopeful Evelle Younger has tried to project himself as a tough, efficient crime-fighting alternative to guru government. But behind his posture as a crusader for law and order is Younger's total inability to curb the growing influence of organized crime in California during his seven-year reign as state attorney general.

Younger has spent $15 million since 1971 building up the much touted Organized Crime and Criminal Intelligence Branch (OCCIB) of his Justice Department. But glaringly apparent is his failure to secure a single arrest or conviction of a major California mobster. This lackluster performance is even more striking when compared to the 31 arrests and 11 convictions of organized crime figure made by the California Justice Department in the fiscal year just prior to Younger's taking office.

The reason for the poor track record of the OCCIB, Younger's critics contend, is the attorney general's obsession with combating terrorists and left wing militants rather than the mob. In the 1975 review of OCCIB's budget, the California Office of the Legislative Analyst blasted the unit for "appearing to center most of its efforts on militant groups and motorcycle gangs, rather than on the traditional organized [crime] activities for which it was established." As a result, the legislative analysts concluded, "We see no demonstrable evidence that the branch has been responsible for eliminating any significant organized crime operation and believe it should be terminated unless it can demonstrate accomplishments."

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed suit to force the OCCIB into disclosing the scope of its operation. "The orientation of the OCCIB is still basically the red squad technique," explains Brent Barnhart, legislative advocate for the ACLU of Northern California, "We oppose it because it usually ends up meaning surveillance and spying on people." This year, for example, the OCCIB was exposed for its role in training regional intelligence units that collected files on such well known political figures as Joan Baez, Tom Hayden and Cesar Chavez.

Younger: Justice for all

Even more disturbing to the attorney general's critics are the campaign contributions Younger has recieved from individuals with links to organized crime. In his initial run for the state's top law enforcement office, Younger received a $45,000 loan from the business empire of C. Arnholt Smith. The San Diego businessman has a long history of dealings with mob-related figures and was himself convicted for fraud. Another Younger contributor was John "Jake the Barber" Factor who gained a reputation in the 1940s and 1950s as a confidence man and swindler. Now a Los Angeles resident and a self-described "philanthropist," Factor gave Younger $1,250 in 1970 and another $3,000 for his re-election campaign in 1974.

Younger also garnered a $1,000 contribution in 1971 from Sydney Korshak, a labor relations attorney from Los Angeles and Chicago. The check proved a major embarrassment to Younger this year when his own Organized Crime Control Commission issued a report branding Korshak as "an attorney for Chicago organized crime figures and the key link between organized crime and big business."

Younger's campaign officials, however, insist that he has put in a solid performance as the state's top crime fighter. They explain that Younger has concentrated on assisting local prosecutors in seeking criminal indictments. "He's done a very good job on this," claims Younger's deputy campaign manager, Shel Lytton, "the difference between him and others, is he's done it in a very low-key way."

Lytton also brushes off Younger's campaign contributions and suggests that the Korshak affair was actually an example of Younger's integrity. "If you're going to run an operation straight and above board, these kinds of things are going to happen," he says. "If Younger was going to be politically astute, he would have taken off Korshak's name [from the organized crime report] but instead he took the heat for it."

—Joel Kotkin and Paul Grabowicz

Unbreakable china

Chinese Editors Ask the Wrong Question

On August 23, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hosted a private lunch for a delegation of "red" Chinese newspaper editors.

One of the editors promptly attacked Sen. George McGovern (D.-S.D.) for his statement suggesting international intervention in Cambodia. "You are mouthing the Politburo line," he said to McGovern. Then, turning to Sen. Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.), the unfazed editor asked, "Don't you agree Sen. Jackson?" Jackson, one of Peking's close friends in the Senate, squirmed, "Well I certainly wouldn't want to say that."

The Chinese editors persisted: "How many Senators here agree the U.S. ought to invade Democratic Kampuchea? Please raise your hands."

"That was not what Sen. McGovern said," Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Sparkman (D.-Ala.) interjected. The Alabama senator then asked McGovern to outline his position. Slightly ruffled, McGovern explained that he was advocating international, not unilateral, action and added, "I do not lie awake at night worrying whether Peking approves of my statements."

Still, the Chinese seemed unwilling to let the issue drop. Sen. Clifford Case (R.-N.J.) exploded. "You people," he said staring straight at the Chinese, "have the most influence there. Why don't you try and stop this genocide."

One participant later termed the meeting a "diplomatic disaster." •

Amateur hour in the Oval Office

White House Dilutes SALT Solution, Senate Balks

Chief U.S. arms negotiator Paul Warnke has indicated to several high government officials that he expects a SALT agreement "well before the end of the year." The Soviets have settled on two critical points; one affecting the vulnerability of our land-based missiles, the other relating to the data base by which we will assess Soviet compliance with any agreement.

The Soviets have accepted a provision to maintain the number of multiple warheads added to their heavy missiles at levels below which they could pose a serious threat to the survival of our Minute Man missile force. And the Soviets have agreed to a "common data base," a first in the history of arms control negotiations. In short, each side will tell the other exactly how many missiles they have.

After the latter concession, which the U.S. had long sought, principal Soviet negotiator Deputy Foreign Minister V.S. Semenov sidelined Warnke and said, in reference to traditional Russian political secrecy, "You have just succeeded in overturning 400 years of Russian history."

At the same time, the White House could, ironically, jeopardize the treaty's chance of success in the Senate. Word has filtered down to Congress that Carter might circumvent the Senate treaty ratification process—requiring a 2/3 vote in favor—opting instead for an executive agreement which requires a simple majority in both houses. Astonished, majority leader Robert Byrd and a group of senators led by Charles Mathias (R.-Md.), a long time proponent of SALT, fired off angry letters to the President.

One prominent liberal Democratic senator threatened to vote against a SALT agreement if the President tried "an end run on the Senate." Even Carter's own men, Secretary Cyrus Vance and Paul Warnke, thought the President had overstepped his bounds.

One high-ranking senate aide said, "He floated a test balloon and it burst in his face. It's just another example of Administration incompetence." Assuming Carter realizes that he has more to lose than gain by an insta-treaty approach with Congress, Warnke believes that the new provisions—while they may not satisfy the most hard-line critics—will persuade moderates to support a SALT treaty. •

Pot pressure

Congressman Blows Off Smoke

When Congressman Edward (Ned) Pattison (D.-N.Y.) confessed in an August 15 press release that he had "tried marijuana a few times," his press aide came to work early the next morning expecting all hell to break loose. Instead, the office got only two calls from the media, both from reporters in Pattison's mostly rural upstate New York congressional district.

So far, the reaction from the voters and the press back home has been mostly favorable, granting Pattison good marks for his "honesty." During a Schenectady, N.Y., FM talk show, devoted to the candid congressman's unusual admission, 30 of the 36 callers—most of them under 35—praised him for his courage and openness and said they would vote for his re-election. Pattison has combined his personal confession with a call for legalization of pot use by adults.

The press release was prompted by an article, slated for the November issue of *Playboy* magazine, detailing pot smoking among congressmen. The 45-year-old Pattison was the only one of the 118 lawmakers surveyed for the article who requested that his remarks be on the record. The eastern N.Y. congressman said, "We had to meet this on our own terms," and went on to chastise those, "who do one thing in private and say another in public."

The response to his forthrightness, however, hasn't been entirely favorable. An editorial in the *Saratogian*—a paper covering the hometown of Pattison's hardline conservative Republican opponent—complimented the congressman for his candor but added that, "The virtue of honesty is not enough to absolve one of the crime itself." And Mrs. Pattison told an Albany television reporter that the family has been subject to late-night harassment because of her husband's remarks.

—Ken Cummins and Lois Romano

Pattison: No Dope

Dynamite fishin'

Troubled Bridge Over Water, Ruffians Raisin' Hell

North Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, is rough territory and the people who live there are often coarse and disagreeable.

Such were the people who hung out at the Bull Slough Bridge, a 144-foot one-laner that crossed the backwaters of Lake Tuscaloosa. The bridge people, teenagers mostly, went there to sun themselves, do a little diving and swimming and perhaps wet a fishing line or two. But they also went there to drink.

They got rowdy on occasion and numerous area residents complained that driving across the bridge was an ordeal of rude remarks and obscene gestures. It being an election year, Sheriff Beaser Walker decided to rid the bridge of the troublemakers. This, according to County Commissioner Bobby Miller, "teed off" the bridge people.

So, sometime before dawn on August 6, they blew up the Bull Slough Bridge—or at least someone blew it up—with several sticks of dynamite. Expertise with explosives and access to dynamite are not hard to come by in strip mining country.

Investigators from the Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms say they know who is responsible and expect to present evidence to a federal grand jury in Birmingham on Sept. 5. There are plans to repair the bridge but, as Commissioner Miller said, "There's no guarantee there won't be more trouble out there once we get it fixed."

"They get out there and get to raisin' hell, just like we did when we was kids." He adds, "Only we didn't have no dynamite..."—*Tommy Stevenson*

CALVIN HARRIS

Bull Slough: A new low

Take the money and run

Bank of America to Vietnamese Refugee: Drop Dead

A Vietnamese widow has filed a $101 million class action suit against California's giant Bank of America for their refusal to return $20,000 she deposited at the bank's Saigon branch in 1973.

Quyen Thi Durrent, who now lives with her daughter in San Francisco and survives on $350 a month in government benefits, told *New Times* that she deposited her money in the world's largest bank because American friends advised her, "You put your money right there; that's a good bank in America." Quyen says the bank provided her with a deposit book that bragged that the money was protected by the U.S. Federal Deposits Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

Two years later, during the fall of Saigon in April 1975, Quyen says she went back to the bank to check on her money and was told by a bank official that there was no cause for concern. "Why do you want to get it out," she recalled the bank official saying, "America will never leave Vietnam." Within a few days, however, the bank closed its doors, the Americans pulled out, and Quyen fled the country, leaving behind three of her four children.

When she arrived in the United States and tried to retrieve her money from the B. of A., Quyen says they balked at her request. Enlisting the help of an American friend, she spent the next three years writing an estimated 500 letters to the bank, the U.S. Comptroller of the Currency, the State Department, the Treasury Department and finally President Carter, in a vain attempt to recover the lost funds.

Although the B. of A. never responded in writing to her request, she did find out, through the federal government, that her account was never insured by the FDIC and that the Bank of America "unilateraly" assigned the funds to the Central Bank of Vietnam. Quyen was told she would have to go to Hanoi to retrieve her money.

In frustration, she finally turned to the law firm of Melvin "the king of torts" Belli, and sued the B. of A. for fraud, negligence, breach of contract and "intentional infliction of emotional distress."

Attorney Thomas LoSavio, of the Belli firm, says that since filing the class action suit they have received "responses from about a half dozen" other refugees who also lost money to the B. of A.'s Saigon branch. The bank has thus far refused comment, explaining they've yet to be served on the case.

Quyen, meanwhile, has taken a very philosphical approach to her three-year tangle with the American bureaucratic maze. Staring at a foot-thick pile of correspondence she has accumulated, she shrugged and said, "I don't got no money but I got beaucoup paper."

—Paul Grabowicz

DAVE PATRICK

Quyen Thi Durrent: Banking on Belli

Guys and Dolls

Out of the Closet and into the *Post*, Gay Bob Gets Smeared

The August 4 edition of the Denver *Post* contained a story about "Gay Bob," a doll for homosexuals marketed nationwide—complete with a toy closet. Appearing in the article were a series of insensitive quotes attributed to local toy merchants, including suppositions of lewd activities on storeroom shelves. Much to the *Post*'s dismay, the story was a spoof and was never intended for publication.

Two days later, the *Post* published a correction acknowledging that there was "some misinformation" in the story. Indeed, one of the only facts which appeared in the story was that Gay Bob actually exists. "The quotes were all fake," said one *Post* reporter, "As soon as the story hit the street, people from the department stores were on the phone."

Ray Neyland, a toy buyer for the May D and F Company, was shocked to read that he had said Gay Bob was a good gift for a kid who had a "domineering mother," especially since he had never spoken to the story's author, Marice Doll. "We've received a lot of threats since the story ran," Neyland said, "and several church groups have promised to picket the store if we try to market it."

"Marice wrote the story as a joke," says one source inside the *Post*'s newsroom, "and gave it to the night editor as a joke." The article found its way to the desk of assistant city editor Jim Duffy, who had originally assigned it as a straight piece. Duffy then passed it on to assistant managing editor Jim Powers, who gave it to executive city editor Chuck Green. Somewhere along the way the joke was lost and the story was printed.

Alana Rothstein, special events director for the Denver Dry Goods Company, refused to comment even though she was quoted as saying, "We're particularly concerned about what happens if we mix it with other dolls." Rothstein is, or was, a personal friend of Doll.

The article was pulled from later editions of the *Post*. *Post* managing editor Robert Pattrige admitted the story was "erroneous" but declined to comment on any action which might be taken regarding those involved.

—Carol O'Connor

FABIO MUCCHIULASON

Gay Bob: I love your shirt

Don't call back

Abbie Hoffman, Close Call but Charges Refused

WIDE WORLD

Abbie: Long distance

There were numerous rumors that Abbie Hoffman was among the crowd of 2,500 who rallied at Madison Square Garden's Felt Forum on August 23, for dismissal of cocaine charges pending against him. Despite speculation that Hoffman would be apprehended or perhaps turn himself in, it was ABC's "Good Morning America" which came the closest to costing the fugitive his freedom.

The morning before the rally, former Yippster Jerry Rubin was David Hartman's guest on the show. Hoffman was scheduled to phone in for an on-the-air interview, but after agreeing to Hoffman's conditions, ABC-TV's legal division got cold feet. The lawyers seemed to think it would be their duty to report the fugitive's phone call to police for tracing. Faced with an obvious dilemma, "Good Morning America" staffers decided on an alternative course of action: Abbie called twice, and twice they refused to accept the charges.

"It would be ironic, after four years of running," Hoffman told *New Times* from a wilderness hideout, "to be busted by telephone. 'Welcome to "Good Morning America," you are under arrest. Any quotes you give may be used against you . . .'" •

Role models

Gangs Improvise as Extras on Set, Local Police Get into the Act

Universal Studios' stab at making an authentic California version of *West Side Story* is proving more realistic than the producers intended. Already, there have been several unscripted rumbles around the set of *Gang! A Love Story*.

The trouble started last month when the movie's producers began using some 100 members of three Los Angeles gangs as extras for the film which is about a blossoming love affair between a Chicano gang leader and an Anglo girl. The gangs have upstaged even the film's star—baby faced teenybopper idol Robby Benson—with antics which have included a violent gang showdown.

Benson: Learning to count

A fight broke out when the producer unwittingly used several members of the Venice V-13's while shooting a scene in Culver City, the home turf of the Rincones—a group not in the film. Incensed by this indiscretion, six Rincones, some carrying belts wrapped around their fists, stormed the set and attacked the V-13s in front of crew members and local police.

"This is an everyday occurrence," said Culver City police officer Phillip Stone, the man who broke up the melee. "The gangs are always fighting and they don't care who's around when they attack." Since the Culver City battle, there have been "many other incidents" of unrehearsed gang warfare which, according to Universal spokesman Booker McClay, has led the producers to curtail further use of the improvising extras.

But it may already be too late to erase the taint of reality from *Gang!* At least one of the V-13s involved in the movie is suspected of snuffing out a man in Oxnard. Already, there are growing concerns from local police officials that movies like *Gang!* encourage gang violence by romanticizing their macho lifestyle.

"This seems to add some status to being a gang member and we think it's a bad idea," said an obviously upset LAPD commander, Bill Booth. "This is counterproductive to the peace and order of the community. It tells a little kid that if you want to get your picture in the paper or get into the movies, become a gang member."

—Joel Kotkin and Ray Riegert

Dumping in the wild

PCB's Unloaded on Rural Roadsides Create North Carolina Health Hazard

Last July, an estimated 15,000–30,000 gallons of toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were dumped along nearly 270 miles of rural road in North Carolina. PCBs build up in the body's fatty tissue and have been linked to birth defects, cancer and skin disorders. Several people in the affected areas in North Carolina have already complained of nausea, diarrhea, dizziness and cramps.

"Of course we don't know what the long terms effects will be," said Dr. Martin Hines, the state epidemiologist. "We just say there is no known safe allowable dose." Dr. Hines says that as many as 5,000 people may be exposed. After a slow start, state and federal officials have begun testing water supplies, cattle, pastures, and the air for PCBs, and caution signs have been placed along the roads. Governor Jim Hunt called the spills a "dastardly act" and announced a $2.5 million dollar program to dig up the top three inches of contaminated soil and move it to clay and plastic lined landfills.

JIM STRICKLAND

The state mops up

Criminal investigations are centering on the Transformer Sales Company, a small industrial waste hauling company near Allegany, N.Y., which transported PCBs from Raleigh last July. New York authorities say the company did not register to transport the PCBs as the law demands. Transformer Sales Company President Robert Burns denied the North Carolina spills. State investigators speculate that the PCBs were dumped to avoid complying with a new law controlling PCB disposal.

Disregarding the problems in North Carolina, officials from the nation's major power companies met with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington on August 21 to complain about the planned restrictions for PCB disposal. They claim the new procedures will be too expensive.

—Bob Drogin

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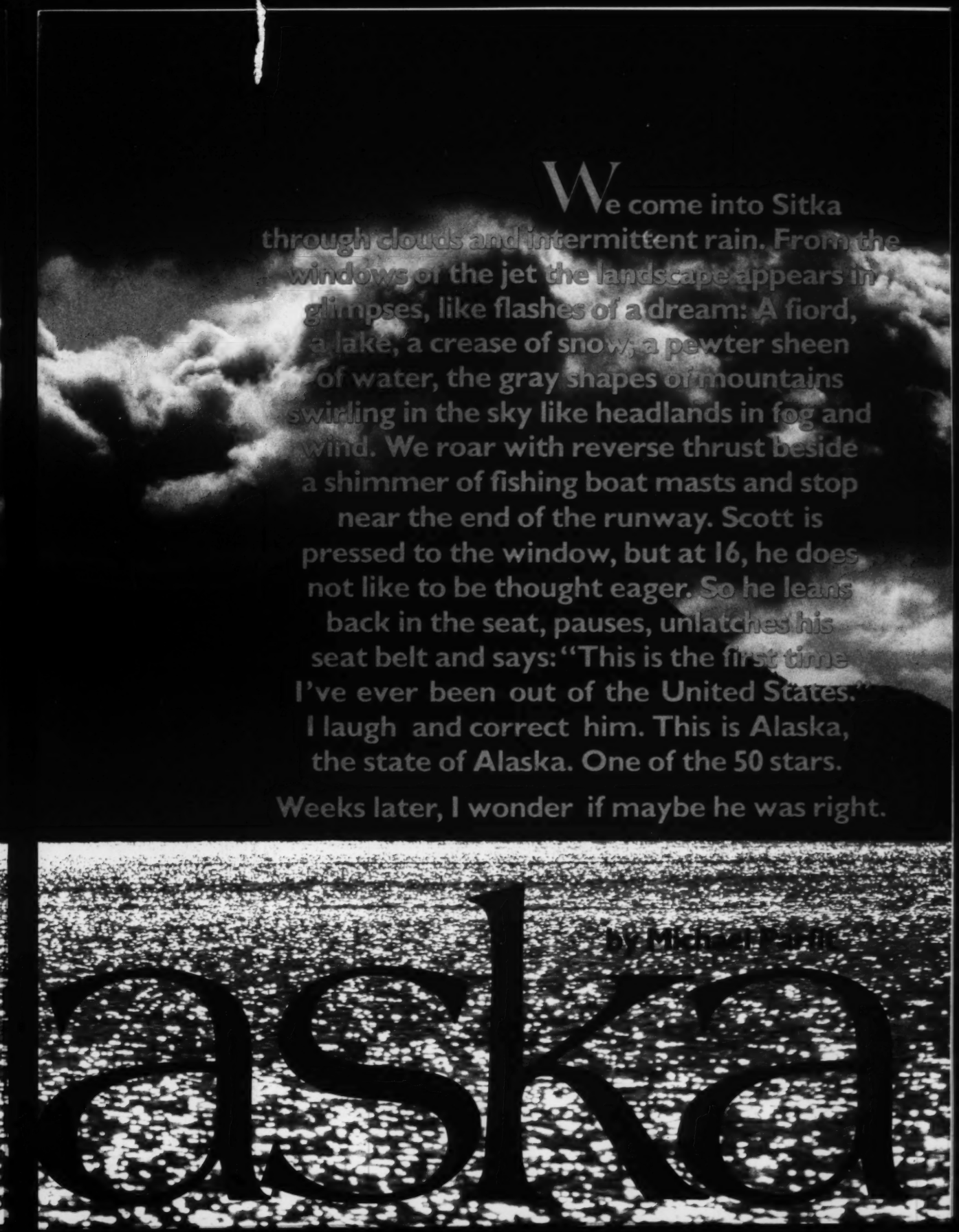

Alaska

by Michael Parfit

We come into Sitka through clouds and intermittent rain. From the windows of the jet the landscape appears in glimpses, like flashes of a dream: A fiord, a lake, a crease of snow, a pewter sheen of water, the gray shapes of mountains swirling in the sky like headlands in fog and wind. We roar with reverse thrust beside a shimmer of fishing boat masts and stop near the end of the runway. Scott is pressed to the window, but at 16, he does not like to be thought eager. So he leans back in the seat, pauses, unlatches his seat belt and says: "This is the first time I've ever been out of the United States." I laugh and correct him. This is Alaska, the state of Alaska. One of the 50 stars.

Weeks later, I wonder if maybe he was right.

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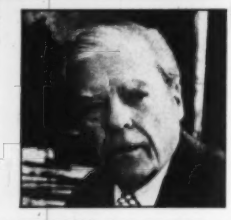

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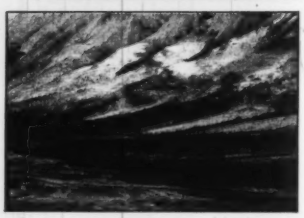

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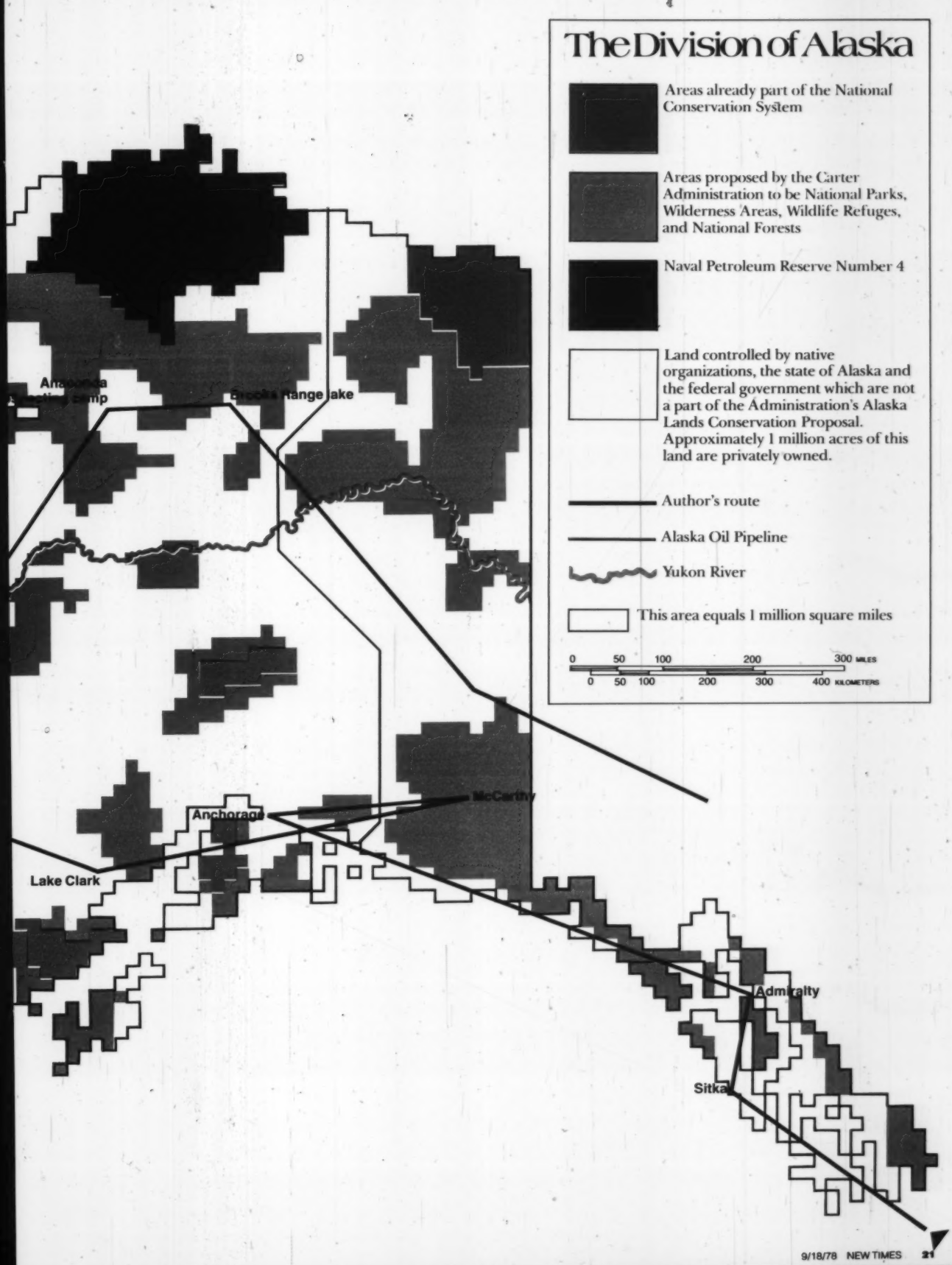

The Division of Alaska
Areas already part of the National Conservation System
Areas proposed by the Carter Administration to be National Parks, Wilderness Areas, Wildlife Refuges, and National Forests
Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4
Land controlled by native organizations, the state of Alaska and the federal government which are not a part of the Administration's Alaska Lands Conservation Proposal. Approximately 1 million acres of this land are privately owned.
Author's route
Alaska Oil Pipeline
Yukon River
This area equals 1 million square miles
0 50 100 200 300 MILES
0 50 100 200 300 400 KILOMETERS
Brooks Range
Anchorage
McCarthy
Lake Clark
Admiralty
Sitka

On a clear day the village of Sitka pummels you with beauty. It is too much. You cower from it, as from too much sun. But fortunately the weather is usually bad, and Sitka's magic is in its mists. Then the mountains that mass on its eastern edge like a herd of musk oxen, bluff and shaggy, shift their positions and snort gray breath across the town.

I. southeast

sitka

Then you know you are on the west edge of the Alexander Archipelago, hundreds of miles from any connecting roads, and the rest of the world is as removed as the snowdrifts that appear in the Sitka sky among gusts of vapor. Sunlight ruffles patches of sea, and on the brusque islands of the Sitka Sound the hemlock and spruce trees sway, marching in and out of rain. When a cloud breaks there is a sudden flash, there are prickles of moisture on your face, and the whole air glitters.

On the day Scott Evans and I arrive in Sitka to begin our journey through Alaska, a brisk Pacific storm is breaking up as it encounters the land. Scott and I have come here with different preconceptions about this state—he is a 16-year-old friend from a tiny town in Idaho and our backgrounds differ—but there are certain things we both know about Alaska the way we might know statistics about our parents: Age, weight, color of eyes. Alaska, the 49th state, is the largest in the union with 586,412 square miles; it now holds 400,000 people, still less than one to the square mile; and it is a center of national controversy.

As we get into town, Sitka is still throbbing over yesterday's passage, in the U.S. House of Representatives, of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Bill. The bill, which still faces a battle in the Senate, would set aside about 120 million acres of Alaska land to be national parks, wildernesses, wild and scenic rivers, wildlife refuges and national forests. In one sweep it would double the size of the entire national park system. In size and impact it is one of the nation's largest land protection bills ever. Jimmy Carter calls it his conservation project of the year; Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus calls it the most important conservation issue he will see in his lifetime.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Bill permeates life in Alaska this summer. But that's not what it's called. Its nickname, heard in bars, on street corners, at campaign breakfasts, and just about anywhere people gather to fight, is "d-2." One visiting senator thought that meant a new kind of pesticide. Both the phrase and the concept come out of an act passed in 1971 that settled Alaska native land claims but that also, in a brief and buried section labeled 17-d-2, required Congress to decide by the end of 1978 which of Alaska's lands it wanted to protect. That deadline created the current moment of noisy debate, and unless Congress postpones it, will lead to a decision this year.

One hundred and twenty million acres is a lot of land. It's a bit less than a third of Alaska, a bit more than the area of California. It's almost twice the size of Great Britain. The 120 million acres that would be protected by the d-2 bill are, of course, not in one piece; on maps of Alaska, particularly those drawn by the opposition—which thinks the bill will limit development and cost jobs—the chunks of land included in the House bill appear to drench the state in Rorschach blots of colored ink. The associations vary: Butterflies and dragons.

On the day last year that Representative John F. Seiberling of Ohio came to Sitka to hold a hearing on the d-2 bill, Jack McLeod was listed in the official record as having been present. He was not. Instead he was sitting on a rock in the Pacific, wondering how long it would to take him to die.

Jack McLeod is a big smoked ham of a man with white sideburns who, like everyone else in Sitka, owns a boat. (His is an 18-foot Reinell inboard-outboard.) He is a member of Local 962 of the United Paperworkers International Union. Scott and I are now riding in Jack's boat up the inland passage. The day is variable: Anvils of thunderclouds rest on pillars of rain; squalls of wind, scattered by the many islands, claw furrows in the water of the bays, and everything keeps changing color: The sea from dark blue to light blue to turquoise to green, the land from pale green to deep green to blue. The forests are salted with gray, like the stubble of McLeod's beard. I will learn that the flecks of gray among the trees are evidence of unmolested maturity, something seldom seen in lower 48 forests where harvest is the rule. The woods are full of standing snags, the dead trees, the closing of the cycle, waiting for the wind or the lightning of final execution. Occasionally on a prominent snag there rests a bald eagle, bright head on somber shoulders.

The sea around Sitka is mined. Logs that have escaped from the sweep of harvest roll low in the water, and rocks snuggle under the tide, hissing at swells. When Jack McLeod hit one of these invisible mines in early July last year at 40 miles an hour in the boat he owned at the time, the collision eventually left him on the top of a small, jagged island, from which he watched surf take his boat apart. He spent three days there, drank 12 small cans of apple juice and tomato juice, and by the third day he had discovered that dying this way might take a long time.

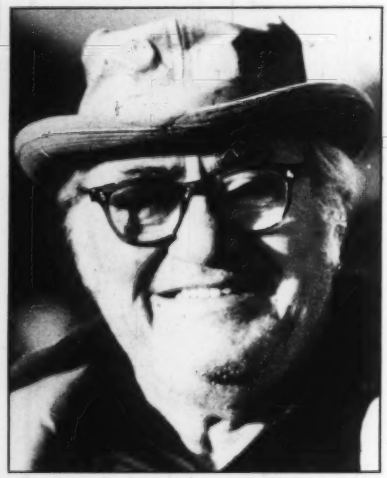
McLeod has not forgotten his ordeal. He considers it relevant to the conflict

Opposite: Scenes of Sitka

over wilderness and jobs, and it does not stray long from his conversation. His voice has its own power; now, as the 18-footer skims the channel, he doesn't have to raise it to cover the engine's roar.

"This is *all* wilderness," he says. "You want to go on a picnic, you just pull up to a little beach, and, shoot! it's wilderness. I can show you ten acres of clams

"There's enough land here to keep everything going forever. You could put 50 million people up here and they'd never find each other"
—Jack McLeod



that nobody ever thinks of digging. You go out walking in this country you probably get eaten by a goddamn bear. When the fish are in, the sky is so full of eagles you're afraid to open your door and let your cat out. Hell, that place where I was on that rock. *That* was going to be a wilderness area."

Jack McLeod works at the Alaska Lumber and Pulp Mill about three miles from Sitka up a fiord. There the air is sweet and hazy with the smell and smoke of Sitka spruce and hemlock being turned into pulp—pure white sheets of a bleached material that feels like blotting paper, soft and slightly absorbent, and which is loaded in bales on ships that bear names like *Wrangell Maru*. McLeod is 63 and is getting ready to retire; he works in the salvage yard, welding, cutting, repairing. He doesn't see much of the wood.

Sitka spruce is a king of conifers. Lean, long-fibered, light and resilient, it goes into, among other things, Steinway pianos, sailboat masts, and light, sleek, wooden racing aircraft. It is ironic that virtually all of the virgin Sitka spruce cut in Alaska is dissolved and kneaded and pressed into pulp, shipped to Japan, and used there to make rayon, photographic paper, and cellophane. Alaska Lumber and Pulp, a Japanese-owned firm, and Louisiana-Pacific, the other major timber-consuming company in southeast Alaska, both export their products. So complete is the Japanese hold on the timber of southeast Alaska that if you want to build a wooden-frame home in Sitka or Juneau, where your views are filled with magnificently forested hillsides, you use Douglas fir two-by-fours shipped up from Washington State.

McLeod swings the boat into a narrowing inlet. The water is slick. On the shore, marked by a florescent-orange navigation sign, is a piece of land from which the trees were cut some years ago. The young trees here are a pale green, growing in dense swatches of northern jungle up the steep slope. In the lowering evening light the stumps on the hillside stand out white, like rows of scattered teeth.

"That was cut right to the bone about 15 years ago," McLeod says. "I mean right to the nitty gritty. And you can see what's happened to it in just a few years. People on the ferry that goes by here don't even notice this little patch."

Scott is listening intently but says nothing. I am as ignorant of his opinion as Jack is of mine. I know that if I were on the ferry I would notice the cut, as I would particularly notice the newer cuts made up a more distant bay, where the hillside looks as if a vast scythe had skinned the land up to an elevation of about 1,000 feet and had left a scab.

"This is a good example of a renewable resource," McLeod says. "There's enough land here to keep everything going forever. And there's enough wilderness for 50 million people—you could put them all up here and they'd never be able to find each other."

The rock that Jack McLeod was marooned on was about 30 feet above the water. It had no flat place on it. The part that was reasonably dry was almost an acre in size. The first night—in which, of course, the light never quite died—the wind was strong and spray flew across the rock, leaving bits of foam dancing in the air like butterflies. In the morning a helicopter flew past, thumping its way up the coast to a logging camp. It never paused to acknowledge McLeod's shouts. The shore of Chichagof was a mile and a half away: McLeod could see the logs of driftwood on its beach. The rock and the shore are part of the 420,000-acre West Chichagof-Yakobi Island wilderness area contained in the House bill.

The bill as passed by the House would create not only this wilderness but also protect 1.1 million acres of Admiralty Island, 50 miles east of Sitka. The contention is not over whether these areas are scenic or not, but over the perennial question of jobs. There is some fancy juggling of numbers in the paperwork that either seeks to justify or deny this wilderness. It all boils down to some simple uncertainties: The Forest Service figures a certain level of annual harvest is allowable to keep a forest growing at the rate it is being cut. When you withdraw 1.5 million acres, much of it timber country, from the pool of available wood, you lower the size of the pool and thus the size of the annual cut. The House Interior Committee estimates that, after wilderness selections, some 703 million board feet of timber will be available for harvest each year; the industry estimates between 350 and 420. The difference, besides showing the malleability of such statistics, is significant for this: The two southeast companies cut an average of just over 500 million board feet of timber a year. Under the industry prediction they would decline and jobs would be lost.

"I don't understand it," McLeod says. "I just don't understand it." To him there is something sinister in the whole proposition. The idea that you must protect this rugged land from the human beings who still seem so insignificant within it seems so specious to McLeod that he suspects it must cloak a devious federal intent.

"The average guy just isn't going to see this wilderness," McLeod says. "It'll be a private reserve for a bunch of bastards ain't any better than I am."

On the rock off Chichagof, Jack McLeod dreamed. He was never warm: The wind was cool and the days overcast. The surf threw spray. He lay on the jagged stone and drifted between levels of consciousness. The first day the tide delivered his boat to the rock and stranded it there. He salvaged the juice, cans of spaghetti, Spam and plums, and a thermos half full of coffee. Later the tide took the boat away, and in the pale northern night he could hear it pounding on the rocks until at last there was silence and it was gone. When the juice cans were empty he drank from the brackish pools collected on the rocks from spray and dew, where hermit crabs scuttled among white barnacles and tiny black snails. His shoes had been lost in the wreck, and his feet were scarred and swollen. He drowsed between hope and forgetfulness. He had an acre of wilderness and it was too much.

When the plane that found him finally came, the sun was out and he was asleep.

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admiralty

Cliff Lobaugh carries a .44 Magnum revolver on his trips to his cabin retreat on Admiralty Island, although he knows that any sidearm isn't much help against an angry bear. "If it comes to that," he says, "I think I would use it on myself."

Lobaugh is a solid man with a smile that seems trapped and intimidated by the humorless black beard surrounding it. With his pipe lodged between his teeth like a short dagger and the broad spaces of Admiralty in the background, Lobaugh resembles a portrait in one of his favorite books, *The Wild Grizzlies of Alaska*. The picture is of Allen H. Hasselborg, who lived at Mole Harbor on Admiralty and preferred to associate more with *Shiras* brown bears than with human beings. Hasselborg, the book points out, developed an antipathy against Civilization, Bureaucrats and Women. Lobaugh's antipathies are perhaps more refined, but no less capital.

We have come to Lobaugh's cabin on Admiralty in his 18-foot skiff. The run is just a half hour from Auke Bay, near Juneau, the state capital, where Lobaugh operates a very successful veterinary practice. We are on the Mansfield Peninsula, at the northern end of the island. Scott is out in the woods near the beach looking for eagles' nests, carrying a dark feather 18 inches long, which he found beside the scaly trunk of a Sitka spruce. The feather is like Alaska's legal marijuana—when he gets back to Idaho it will be against the law to possess it. Lobaugh and I sit on a log in the middle of a grassy flat, watching a single Sitka black-tailed deer feeding at the edge of a creek.

In the long sedge near the log, which is combed twice a day by the tide, are the shells of mussels, lying open like petrified butterflies, dry and gleaming. In the stream, slivers of fish—young coho salmon—skitter up the flow. Geese bark like hoarse dogs up near the edge of the forest. A group of ducks in a more distant clearing sends bursts of argumentative quacking out into the evening. We can hear hooters in the woods—spruce grouse that Lobaugh and his three sons call to their guns by blowing over a square-shouldered liquor bottle. There are bald eagles above us, close enough that we can see their eyes, gliding effortlessly in the twilight from land to sea and back. Scott has counted nine already. Near the cabin we just passed a pair of mink, their fur as rich as chocolate, playing along the path to the beach. To the south of us the forests rise to peaks where there is still snow, and beyond the peaks are more forests, long, slender lakes, and 90 miles of Admiralty, vast and empty, 1,100,000 acres of wilderness. Lobaugh is determined that this is the way it should remain.

"This is the last of the big islands left," he says. "You'd think they could save one island. I think it's too bad, if we're the richest nation in the world, not to set it aside. This is one ecological system; it has all the transition zones. You can't screw it up from outside. If you save it, then when all the rest of the salmon are gone, you will still have some standard. But once they get a foothold, they're sort of like a malignancy—it spreads." "They" are one of Lobaugh's antipathies: Loggers. Lobaugh is a member of the Southeast Alaska Chapter of the Sierra Club.

In Lobaugh's cabin—one room and a loft—is a map of the parks and wildernesses proposed by the Alaska Coalition, an organization of conservation groups welded together by the heat of the Alaska d-2 controversy. Many of the proposals were accepted almost intact in the House d-2 bill. Admiralty is the gem of the southeast, a long island shaped rather like a plump mink running south, and it is the heart of the Coalition's preservation demands for this part of the state. Compromises may be made elsewhere, but if Admiralty is opened to logging, conservationists will consider the southeast gutted. Admiralty offers the opportunity, unique in Alaska, of setting aside an entire ecosystem—that mesh of interlocked layers of life which the human presence normally dominates and often tangles. The proposal to make all of Admiralty a wilderness implies a wholeness, a rounded completion of the concept of preservation that is unavailable elsewhere. Here live more bald eagles than in all the lower 48 states; more bears than even Allen H. Hasselborg would care to see in a lifetime; and more salmon-bearing streams than the coast of Maine. Admiralty is a symbol of the fecundity of Alaska; in its mists and crags and coastlines, life blooms, untouched.

But Admiralty is also a symbol of Alaska's image as a storehouse of exploitable resources. About one quarter of its 1,664 square miles supports forests dense and accessible enough to have commercial value. As recently as 1968 the U.S. Forest Service, which now manages the island, considered this forest to be large enough to continuously support one entire pulp mill. Today the timber industry says Admiralty is vital to the survival of the two existing mills and says making it all a wilderness is a concession to romance at the expense of jobs.

"People outside have a conception of Alaska that meets with their expectations of Jack London's stories," said lawyer James Clark, a board member of Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands (CMAL), whom I interviewed shortly before I went to Admiralty. "And, they don't want their Jack London notion of Alaska damaged."

Clark's complaint is common among opponents of the wilderness and park proposals that passed the House of Representatives. Why, they ask, must Alaska furnish the raw material for the daydreams of nonresidents? Why must the people who live here be curtailed from making honest incomes off the resources outside their back doors so that people in Delaware or Tulsa can imagine themselves hiking vast and solitary distances in the Alaskan bush? Clark,

"You'd think they could save one island. It's too bad if the richest nation in the world can't set one aside"
—Cliff Lobaugh

tanned and vigorous, is particularly irritated because he has walked in that Admiralty bush himself and found it hardly romantic. It was late summer when he went, and the devil's club, a fast-growing annual plant with huge prickly leaves and spines on its trunk that would goad an elephant, frothed in his way like concertina wire. "The stuff was so damn thick," he said with a grimace, "that it took 15 minutes to negotiate 100 yards.

"The idea is this. There's a responsibility to set aside lands in the national interest—we're not trying to duck that. But the other responsibility is not to preclude the future opportunities that Alaska holds out for everybody."

In Clark's office, along with the rows of books (*The Federalist, Business Planning, Tax Law Review, Build Your Own Low Cost Home*) is a framed color cartoon of a bearded logger preparing to cut down a tree with a chain saw. Behind him are seven pasty-faced, bespectacled men in gray suits and hats, bearing briefcases. The leading bureaucrat has one white finger raised in complaint. The logger looks bewildered. And in the exaggerated tan of his skin he seems a different race from the men who want to control him.

"I've always been a wilderness nut," says Lobaugh. The stream up at the edge of the clearing gleams with the twilight; the deer has quietly disappeared. The tide has changed. Scott has joined us, talking about the eagles he has seen and about the mink, which hunted around beside him in the tidepools. Lobaugh has filled his pipe with Half and Half; the aroma drifts past us and away.

"I spent six months in the wilderness in British Columbia," he says. "Went in in August with my two oldest boys, came out in January. Lived on the barter type system. I wanted to really feel it—to be stuck in there, to have a miserable existence. But every day was a great day, and when we had to come out we didn't want to go home."

Later, in the semi-dark of the cabin, as the three of us wait for sleep, Scott quizzes Lobaugh on bears. Neither of them is loquacious. They leave gaps that are pleasantly filled with silence.

"You ever seen those bears?"

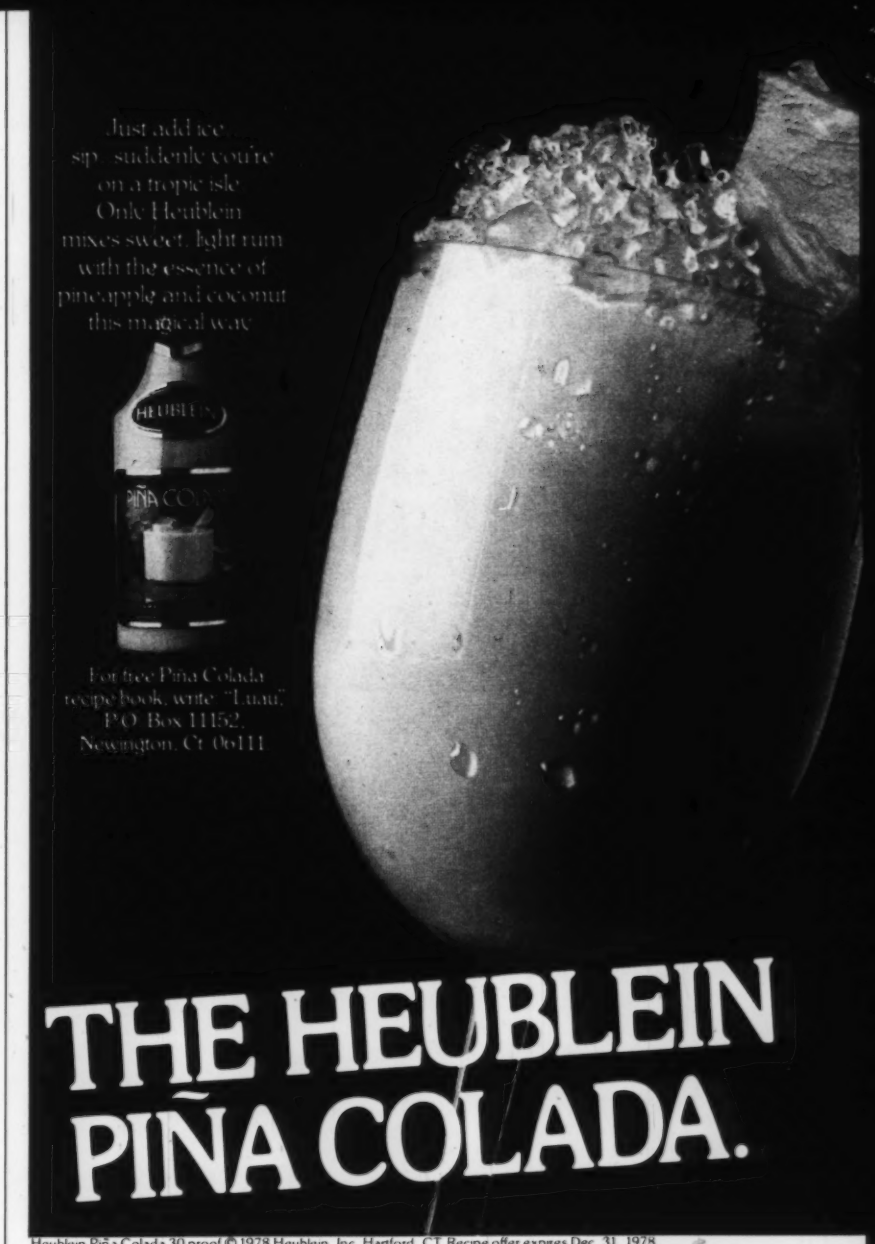
"A few. The old guy who used to live here shot 17 one summer. But you generally don't like to see them."

In the pause I wonder if Lobaugh's bush mousetrap—a condensed milk can strung over a bucket of water and smeared with peanut butter—will wake us up tonight to the tune of a small drowning creature.

"Not even for the first time?" Scott is back to bears.

"Maybe for the first time."

"I keep hoping I'll look out here and see one," Scott says.



Heublein Piña Colada 30 proof © 1978 Heublein, Inc. Hartford, CT. Recipe offer expires Dec. 31, 1978.

"Possibly," Lobaugh answers. "There's a trail just back of the cabin. The bears walk in the same footprints year after year. On the ridges, even in the rock, you can almost see the steps. That alone is worth saving the whole island."

Then, his voice floating down from the loft, disembodied and remote, he repeats the concept that so irritates thousands of Alaskans like Clark but is so fundamental to wilderness preservation: That wilderness is not just for those who hike it; it is a part of a national spirit and we need to know it is there as much as we need to use it. "I wouldn't care if I never visited the island," Logaugh says. "I wouldn't even have to see it to fight for it personally."

I contemplate the island stretching beyond us in the dusk, unpopulated by humans except for one Indian village 75 miles to the south. Out the window near my bunk the mountain ridges are now just profiles, edges of flat gray; the near trees are a nearly black wall without texture; the meadow is a strip of brown and a sliver of water: The tide is up. Beyond this the island lies hidden and, for me, unknowable. I am unlikely ever to see beyond the clearing in which we sat today. But the thought is satisfying. It is like standing on a ridge between valleys and choosing one to travel; you know that the mystery of the valley you deny yourself will enrich your winters as much as the one you chose to see.

Overleaf: Admiralty Island

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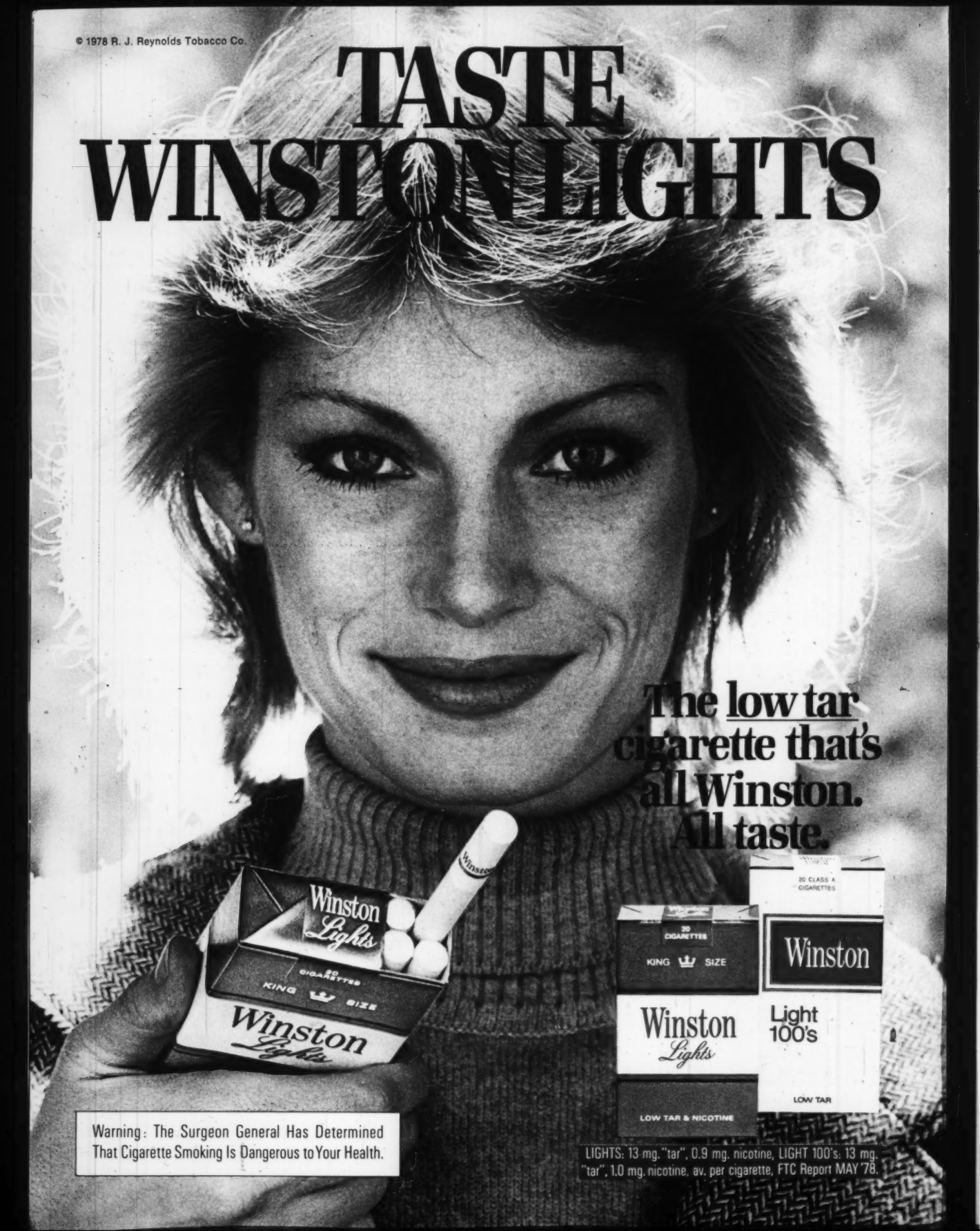
TASTE WINSTON LIGHTS



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In the context of the rest of America, Anchorage is not an ugly city; it has parks, green space, trees, pleasant residential areas, views of the highest mountain in North America, and relatively clean air. But surrounded by the magnificence of this state, it seems a concentration of debris.

II. anchorage

The best thing you can say about Anchorage, one story goes, is that it is only a few miles from Alaska. People from the bush think of Anchorage in terms of pain: They come here to spend money or to visit the doctor or dentist; they tell each other with pride how long they have been able to stay away. Unfortunately, Anchorage is the place wherein resides the power, the votes—and the money—of Alaska.

We fly into Anchorage in late afternoon. In the lobby of the airport Scott takes pictures of the promotional displays: The world's record Alaska Yukon moose taken by bow; a Kodiak brown bear taken by Phil Hammond on December 12, 1966; a bald eagle; a wolf that looks as if it had died of swollen gums, and the first musk ox taken by a sport hunter in the United States.

In the morning Scott homes like a pigeon to Fourth Avenue, where he can snuffle around the outsides of joints like the Booby Trap and the insides of pawn shops ("Hoc it to me"), where he can be insulted by drunk natives and where he can feel urban and tough. I head for courtroom three of the Federal Building, where Kay Fanning and Robert Atwood, protagonists in the great Alaska newspaper war, confront each other across the pale room like two faces of their divided state.

By all laws of economics, Anchorage should be a one-newspaper town. The afternoon paper, *The Times* (circ. 46,000), published by Atwood, is thriving vigorously while the morning paper, Fanning's *Daily News* (circ. 15,000), has been losing money for more than 11 years.

If the issues confronting Alaska today did not have such national significance, the *Daily News* would flutter quietly from the scene. But Atwood and his *Times* are the strongest single voice in Alaska—Ralph Nader calls *The Times* the most powerful newspaper in the United States in terms of its effect on its state. And Atwood has chosen to make that voice a shout promoting unlimited development and opposing conservation. At the same time Kay Fanning has made the *Daily News* one of the most vigorously investigative small dailies in the nation. That the two should clash was inevitable.

In the courtroom, diffused florescent bulbs in the ceiling and sunlight from curtained windows fill the space with a shadowless illumination. It is a room of functional walnut veneer and pale walls. Technically it is not a courtroom today, since it is the site of an arbitration hearing between the two newspapers rather than a trial, but the mood is somber enough for judgment.

In the front of the room is the arbitration panel—three attorneys, one selected by *The Times*, one by the *Daily News*, and a third picked by a federal judge. On either side are the newspapers' lawyers: John Coughenour for *The Times*, a tall, lunging kind of man who sometimes seems to feel too large for the room; and Phillip Battaglia for the *Daily News*, who wears the whimsical moustache of a buccaneer. In the back of the room, at a table next to his pale, powdered daughter, Elaine, sits Robert Atwood.

Atwood holds his face in his left hand like a basketball, fingers spread. It is a seamed face, but not round. If it was a rock it would be metamorphic, pressed, stressed, and ground, unpolished. It is not, however, coarse; its planes and furrows could have been cut and smoothed by a glacier. It is 71 years old. Atwood holds it absently as he reads his notes, then glances at the witness. His gaze is cool.

In the witness stand Kay Fanning is equally poised. She is slender. Her hair is brushed back in waves of gray that sweep like combers past her face. She is 50 years old. She is not nervous; she is quick. Like a wild deer, she bounds at the questions. Her smile flashes, and she turns in the chair, her left hand darting after her ideas. She does not look at Robert Atwood.

Q: Do you believe that Mr. Atwood intentionally defrauded you, intentionally misrepresented facts to you?

A: I don't think he intentionally said one thing and did another, but that was the effect of what happened.

When Robert Atwood took over the management of *The Anchorage Times*, a move facilitated by his marriage into a family that shared control, he did not consider himself a businessman. "I never intended to be in business," he says. "I didn't like business. I came out of college intent on never being in business. It seemed to me everybody was knifing everybody trying to make a nickel, and I thought: There are more interesting things than that." He smiles. He seems to be aware that this is a curious comment from one of the richest men in Alaska.

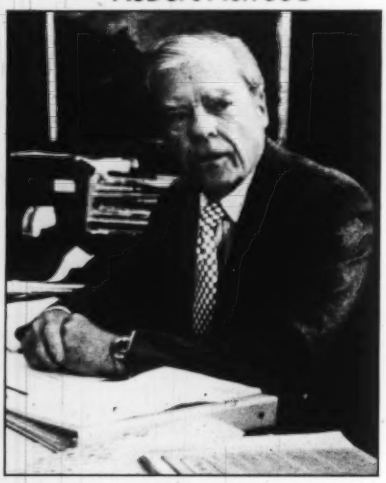
It was 1935. Anchorage was a city of about 2,500 people. *The Times* had a circulation of 650 and ran eight pages a day because the staff hadn't figured out how to print just six. The first thing Atwood did was solve that problem and cut down the size. The next thing he did was catch Alaska fever.

In 1935 Anchorage was genuinely on the last frontier. One steamboat a week to Seward. One train a week to Fairbanks. No telephone. The Chugach Mountains stood stark and forbidding to the east. On clear days Mt. McKinley shone a hundred miles north, as cold and remote as the moon. For Atwood,

28, just another young reporter in Massachusetts, Anchorage was the door into a huge and promising land in which he could be a leader. When he got here, he remembers, "the main thing you did was go to somebody's house and play bridge. We wanted more people. When we got more people we had more things going and more choices of the way we'd live." He had the chance to mold that

"We want to encourage people to think they are in a good place. If that's a boomer, I don't think it's bad"

—Robert Atwood



way of life, and he grabbed it. He supported a winter carnival; he promoted Anchorage by asking well-known people who passed through to compliment the town—"A little town never gets tired of hearing people say you've got a wonderful place here"—and he vigorously sought growth. When the Postmaster General came to inspect a nearby FDR homesteading project, Atwood invited him to break ground for the new federal building while friends took pictures. The Postmaster grinned and shoveled and dug quite a little pit. On the way back to the train he asked Atwood, "What federal building?"

"We don't know," Atwood said, "but we sure would like to get one." It was built.

"All the people wanted others to come here and participate and enjoy this country and so they were all what you might call boomers, boosters, supporters, developers and now the word exploiters," Atwood says. "Conservation wasn't the concern and there wasn't any need. It was all being conserved. All the trees were growing up and growing old and falling over. It was great. All the coal was staying in the ground and the water was flowing down to the sea. But the effort was to get more people here. And we worked at it. We worked hard at it."

And thus both Anchorage and Atwood prospered. He became a recognized leader, a positive thinker whose energy and faith lifted the town again and again. "People here get beat down easy," he says. "If you have a period of bad weather and short daylight times you begin to go nuts... you can feel the community spirit going down so that I'd always try to have an uplift in the paper. In the middle of winter, we'd have a story on what's gonna be built next spring. It always read very healthy and happy and would make everybody think, boy, we're all going to have work next spring."

Atwood promoted statehood. He promoted it and promoted it and in 1958 the territory became the 49th state. After years of similar effort he secured a state vote to move the capital from Juneau to somewhere not far from Anchorage, a move that has been delayed by its cost. And as the *Daily News* became known for its in-depth examination of the state's problems, *The Times*—perhaps seeming more strident only by comparison—became known as the most relentless booster of Alaska's virtues. During the troubled years of pipeline construction, while the *Daily News* and the *Los Angeles Times* were turning over rocks and finding corruption and waste, *The Times* ran a weekly tabloid pipeline supplement reporting the progress of construction.

"We want to encourage people to think you are in a good place, you do have a chance for happiness here." Atwood is wound up and rolling now, the voice of Alaska. "If that's a boomer, I don't think it's bad. We do want to emphasize the good whenever we can. It's not editorializing, it's just telling things you might not bother to write except with that in mind."

Atwood is sitting in his vast office during a break in the arbitration. The room is furnished in dark wood and royal red and has thick carpet and deep chairs. Oil paintings of Alaska hang on the wall: Mt. McKinley, sled dogs, Eskimos. A bronze-etched hard hat rests on a hat stand and behind the desk is a large globe of the world. Atwood's real work area is off in an alcove, where stands a Harris visual display terminal, part of a new computer typesetting system. As delighted as a 12-year-old who has just won a tape recorder selling subscriptions to *Boys' Life*, Atwood demonstrates this instrument to me in detail, typing green letters all over the screen and pulling stories out of the computer like a magician producing doves from his sleeve. His enthusiasm is catching: I sit down and command the screen myself, and we romp over to the computer room to watch the printed words roll out of the machine. Atwood is friendly as a big old jungle cat that has just eaten. He is disarming; he seems to be just a kind and vigorous old man, confident, positive, at ease. Everything he worked for has come to pass, including the structure of power, influence and wealth that is Robert Atwood. He is pleased to run it by again, the 40 years of his glory, and buttress it with his philosophy. Then I ask him what he thinks of the *Daily News'* approach to reporting.

He leans forward. His face is transformed; the lines in it seem to wedge deeper as the pleasure dries off the clay. The grin has disappeared. He shoves his watch around on his wrist.

"Why do you ask me about them?" It is an accusation. Any rapport is gone. "Do I have to comment about *them*?"

Larry Fanning was the quintessential liberal journalist. He started in the trade as copy boy at the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1933 and by the time he was 31 he was managing editor. He moved on to become executive editor of the *Chicago Sun Times* and then the editor of the *Chicago Daily News*. He was the kind of editor who wrote voluminous, thrashing memos that engendered a correspondingly vigorous loyalty among his reporters. "The greatest problem in working for Larry Fanning," one wrote, "was that you knew you had achieved Nirvana and would never be completely happy working for anyone else." Among those who benefited from his rigorous instruction were Pierre Salinger, Peter Lisagor, Mike Royko and Nicholas von Hoffman. He was not afraid of opinion. He once told a young reporter: "Sometimes, in an argument, only one guy is right. When that happens, the people deserve to know the guy is right."

In 1967 Larry Fanning who had recently married Kay Field, ex-wife of his former boss, Marshall Field, Jr., paid $450,000 for the *Anchorage Daily News*. "He saw it as a laboratory newspaper," Kay Fanning says now. "He wanted to use it to try to produce some very significant journalism here, and use it to train young journalists."

He also made it a vehicle to bring a new breath of liberalism to a conservative state. In 1968, after Robert Kennedy's assassination, Fanning called for "a tough, rigid, uncompromising gun law, a law that will cover handguns and long guns, a law that will prohibit mail-order purchases, a law that, enforced, will register the ownership of every weapon." Alaska nearly shot him.

In February 1971, Larry Fanning died of a heart attack, leaving the *Daily*

News to his wife, Kay, whose training in journalism had been her association, as an undergraduate, with *The Current*, a short-lived second paper at Smith College, and five years as librarian and reporter at the *Daily News*.

Kay Fanning shared her husband's belief that journalism came first and profits second: "Our philosophy is very strongly that a newspaper is in the public interest," she says. "It is a purveyor of ideas, a forum for the exchange of diverse opinions. I don't see it as the primary purpose of a newspaper to build up huge profits." Unfortunately, as the *Daily News* excelled in purveying ideas, it built up huge deficits.

Under Kay Fanning's direction, as under her husband's, the paper was an agressive, investigative voice in the community. It took on prostitution, the pipeline and village justice. Its reporters tailed underworld figures, traveled around the state tracking down witnesses, and once two of them were arrested for trespassing in a massage parlor while uncovering a story. The paper won dozens of major awards. In December 1975 the *Daily News* published "Empire," a massive series about the considerable influence of the Teamsters Union in Alaska. In the spring of 1976 the series won the Pulitzer Prize for Disinterested and Meritorious Public Service, the highest award in journalism.

But over the years the paper lost $5 million.

Most of that deficit was made up out of the voluminous pockets of the Field family. But even those sources were not infinite, and by 1974 Kay Fanning thought she had found a way to avoid digging much deeper. This solution became more compelling later, when Ted Field told his mother that the family funds would be cut off.

The solution that Kay Fanning thought she had found to her financial dilemma was to merge all but her news department with *The Times*. After the first jolt it makes sense. *The Times* has a huge investment in a modern printing plant which is idle part of the time, and joint circulation and advertising departments could, in theory anyway, save both papers money. In 22 other cities in the United States similar arrangements, called joint operating agreements (JOA), have been successful in preventing the demise of weak second dailies without destroying their editorial independence. Convinced, as she would later testify repeatedly at the arbitration, that most problems can be solved by reasonable people sitting down and talking together, Fanning persuaded Atwood, largely by sweetening the pot with her own Sunday edition of the *Daily News*, that the JOA could work. So Atwood took the Sunday paper and signed the agreement. It went into operation December 1, 1974.

But the connection was never comfortable. It was like putting a wolf and a bobcat in the same cage and asking them to lay eggs. During the arbitration, an Atwood lawyer digs out an old letter from Kay Fanning to an associate, written before the JOA negotiations, which asked "Could we really merge with the 'robber barons?'" As if to prove that the bad feeling wasn't one-sided, Fanning's lawyers respond by producing a memo from Atwood that said, "My people consider her [Fanning's] editorial product to be inferior, shameful and something to have nothing to do with. I am sure it would affect the morale of my organization if my people found they were any kind of partners with the *News*."

"A newspaper is in the public interest. I don't think its primary purpose is to build up huge profits" —*Kay Fanning*

It took just six months after the JOA went into effect for Kay Fanning to decide that something was seriously wrong. There were indications by then that *The Times* was not exactly vigorously promoting the survival of the *Daily News*: When someone called the number listed for the *Daily News*' advertising department, it was answered "*Anchorage Times*." Bills sent to *Daily News* subscribers bore, in large letters, the logo "*The Anchorage Times*," with, in small print below it: "Agent for *Anchorage Daily News*." Papers were apparently being delivered haphazardly: The *Daily News* editorial offices fielded daily complaints from people who had not received their papers. Probably the most annoying problem was the difficulty of getting financial information. The first statement on the joint operation was not delivered until five months after the operation began, and other information Kay Fanning requested, she testified later, "simply was not available." That first statement showed a loss for the *Daily News* of $80,000 in one month alone, so Fanning wrote another memo, this addressed to Atwood himself:

"*The Times*' attitude seems to be one of proving that our paper can't be sold. This clearly must be a throwback to the days of competition, i.e., once and for all we'll prove you've got a lousy paper."

But memos, personal discussions and all the reasonable conversation in the world didn't change the situation, and in the fall of 1976, with the blaze of the Pulitzer fading slowly in the sky behind her, Kay Fanning went public with the *Daily News*' financial plight. Then, in February 1977, she filed a $16.5 million lawsuit against *The Times*, charging it with mismanaging the joint agreement. In October Atwood responded by announcing that he would terminate the agreement because the *Daily News* owed *The Times* $300,000 and because the lawsuit had interfered with *The Times*' ability to manage the agreement. In November a U.S. District Court judge ruled that *The Times* could not shut down the agreement without submitting the debts claimed to arbitration, and that's where it stands today.

In the witness chair, Kay Fanning is wearing a beige skirt and blouse and

smiling slightly as the questions are put to her. She has been under pressure a long time: If it shows at all it is in her intensity, her occasional breathlessness in conversation, her determined stride, and the way her smile flashes into her face like the shot of a camera's strobe. But it doesn't show much. During the last recess her two daughters, Kathy, 24, and Barbara, 20, were sitting outside

"This is a key state—we're sitting on the future mineral wealth of the entire United States. We desperately need two newspapers"

the courtroom eating chocolate chip cookies out of a paper bag, and I asked them to describe their mother. They looked at each other in amusement, and then Kathy, a reporter for the *News* herself, said quite seriously. "She is like a person walking a balance beam. She knows she must not look down, so she doesn't."

Russell Arnett, the impartial arbitrator, has interrupted questioning by Fanning's lawyer Phillip Battaglia to ask one of his own: "In your opinion has Bob Atwood acted in good faith in the interest of the *News*?"

Fanning flashes her smile. She knows it's a key question, fundamental to the whole issue. She takes her time to reply. Finally she turns in the chair and says:

"It seems to me there are two Bob Atwoods. One is the most friendly, helpful-talking person in the world. I've always liked Bob Atwood . . .

"But when it came to business, nothing ever happened. When we'd talk, things would go well. But then there'd be no action."

But if Atwood is taking little action to help keep the *Daily News* alive, others are. Kay Fanning makes regular trips to the East Coast to develop financing, from sources she will not name, to support the newspaper's $450,000 a year editorial cost, and so far she has apparently been successful. But nowhere is the demand for the survival of the *Daily News* more vociferous than in Anchorage itself.

"The morning paper is *going* to survive," says Susan Overbey, co-chairperson of a group called Committee for Two Newspapers. "If we all have to go down to the bank and borrow money, it *will* survive."

Overbey calls herself a conservative Republican. "The *Daily News*," she says, "does not speak for my point of view at all. But we need two newspapers. We desperately need two newspapers. This is a key state up here—we're sitting on the future mineral wealth of the whole United States—and we do need the balance terribly. And the morning paper is a gutsy newspaper, full of courage to take on the giants around here. I guess the feeling is, Atwood decides what's good for the state, and if you don't agree with him he takes it personally and you aren't quite as Alaskan as Bob Atwood."

The Committee for Two Newspapers has tried to be a kind of watchdog over the joint agreement. It has worked to solicit subscriptions for the *News* and complained about *The Times* tactics that seem to undermine the second newspaper. It has not yet got the paper turned around, but Overbey has no doubt at all that it will.

"I have seen money come in at the eleventh hour," she says. "Things break in Kay's favor. I think God is reading the morning paper."

Most *Daily News* reporters are ex-*Times*' staff members, a situation that does not recommend the atmosphere in *The Times*' newsroom. *Times* reporters regularly call the *Daily News* asking for jobs, possibly because it is hard to convince a young, vigorous reporter that being a community newspaper means, as *Times* managing editor Clint Andrews told me, that "Suzy Snowflake whose cat had 91 kittens is very important—as important as the arrest of the kid selling dope at West High School."

Paul Nussbaum is one such *Times* refugee. He now covers the legislature in Juneau full time during sessions. *The Times*, incredibly, does not send a staff member to the annual session—possibly, one cynic suggested, because that would defeat one of Atwood's arguments in favor of moving the capital, that you never know what's going on down there. Nussbaum remembers assignment sheets leading him through days of ribbon cuttings and Chamber of Commerce luncheons with no room for genuine reporting. "When I moved to the *Daily News*," he says, "none of my friends asked me why; they just said 'congratulations.'"

In the courtroom Robert Atwood is on the stand. He is the same as when I interviewed him: Boyish and eager. (He raised his hand for the oath long before the court reporter was ready.) He has been drawing diagrams with boxes and arrows all over a green board behind him to illustrate the operation of the joint agreement and the way the new Harris terminal and computer system operates. "Each one of those boxes," he says with restrained pleasure, "looks like a small refrigerator and costs no less than a Cadillac." Atwood can afford to sound pleased. In earlier proceedings there was testimony that *The Times* nets about $100,000 a month. As always, his daughter, Elaine, assistant to the publisher, sits behind the attorneys taking notes on a legal pad. Occasionally Atwood looks back at her and smiles.

John Coughenour, Atwood's attorney, is leading him through a series of questions about his attitude toward the *Daily News* and the joint operating agreement. Atwood has grown slightly tense, and seems far less comfortable sitting in the chair than he did making boxes. He repeats, again and again, the same theme. "We were dealing as friends, not adversaries. The effort was to get along and make things go, not to precipitate a crisis or hurt anybody."

Coughenour discusses the money the *News* alledgedly owes *The Times*; Kay Fanning sits in the back of the room, a faint smile permanently installed on her face. Atwood recalls a meeting in which he asked Fanning how she was going to pay them. "She said maybe she should fold, get a job and spend the rest of her life paying me." His voice is tight, slightly higher pitch than his normal tenor. Fanning's expression does not change.

Suddenly the weight of the whole conflict comes down on Robert Atwood. Unlike Kay Fanning, he must have looked down. In the warmth of the courtroom, the charts he had described with such clarity now behind him, the cool eyes of Battaglia watching him, Kay Fanning on the edge of his vision, her patient smile shaming all his words of conciliation, her poise the symbol of the sentiment rising against him in the sophisticated East, even in his own town, he must suddenly have felt a void around him, into which he could fall if he allowed the thought to grow that perhaps this time he has been too small for his own shoes. "Bob Atwood wants to be a hero," Susan Overbey had said. "He just doesn't know how."

"We're always in the position of being the big paper tramping on the little one," he says, his voice rising in complaint, now almost tight enough to break. "We're not doing that. We're trying to help." Suddenly he can no longer speak. Elaine walks swiftly forward. Coughenour, stunned, turns to the arbitrators: "May we have a recess?" Atwood takes a glass of water from his daughter, drinks, then blows his nose on a handkerchief. Kay Fanning's smile is gone: She leans forward, alive to pain.

And then it is over. The arbitration recesses for the day, and Atwood smiles. And I remember, leaving, something else Susan Overbey had said about *The Times*: "I think they've lost the parade. I think the parade turned a corner, and they're still out in front marching down the street and the parade isn't behind them anymore."

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Which brings us back to the subject of automobiles. In 1933 Bucky Fuller designed and built the Dymaxion Car. It rode on three wheels and steered by a single wheel in the rear. This design made it highly maneuverable and easy to park. It even had front-wheel drive. Sound familiar?

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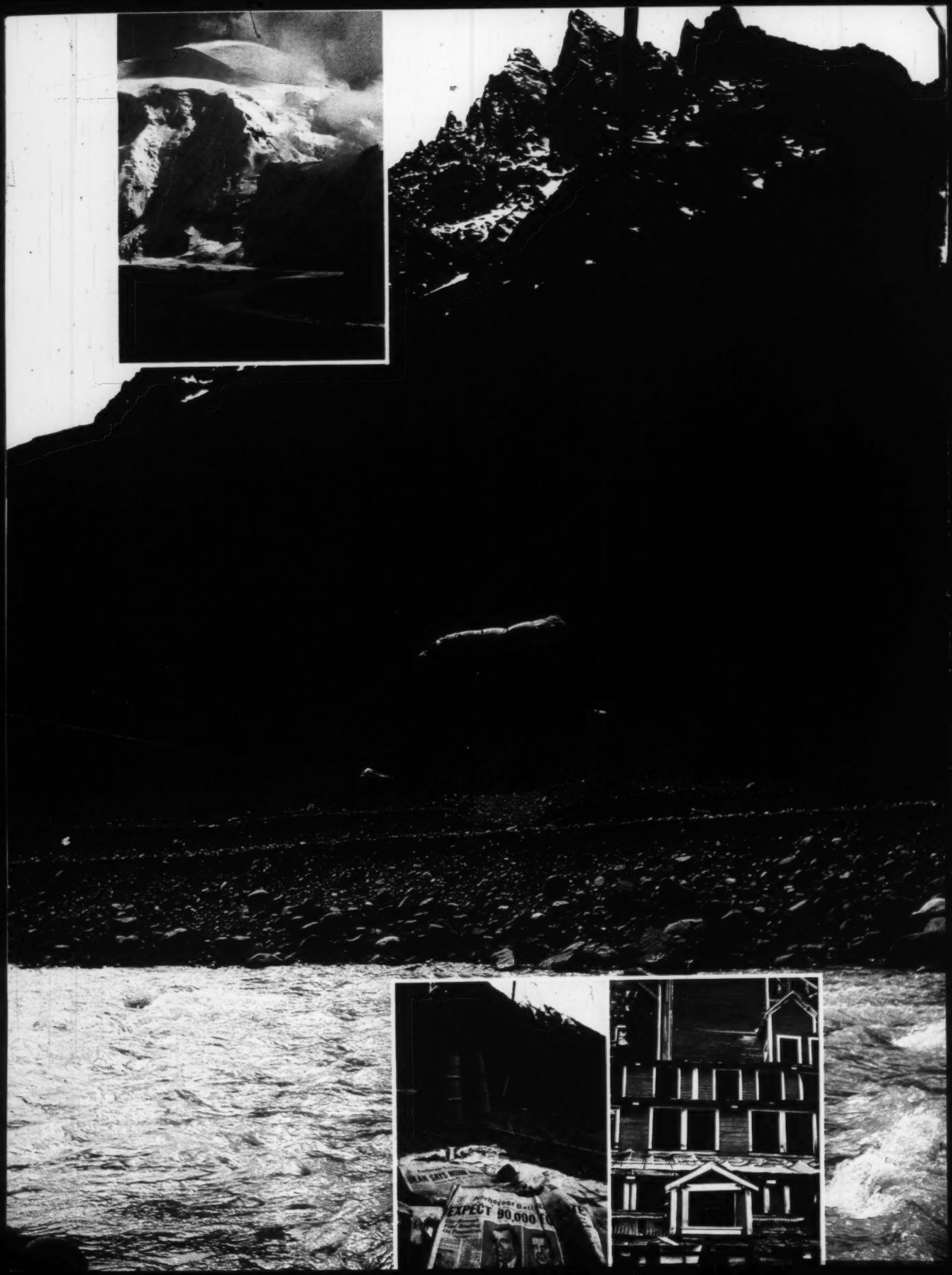

EXPECT 90,000

On a gravel island between two arms of the Chitistone River, just downstream from the tiers of layered rock known as the Mile High Cliffs, an artist with a D-9 Caterpillar Tractor has neatly blocked out these words, in letters 100 feet long: SIERRA CLUB GO TO HELL

III. McCarthy

This sign of welcome, visible only from the air, the common Alaskan highway, stands near a boundary of what could become the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. It is possible that it will remain there for decades, a slowly fading reminder of frustration. Perhaps it should even be protected, with dikes and iron railings, an artifact of the days of land hunger in the biggest state in the Union, the days before the great and terrible Alaska land rush of 1979.

In the mornings in McCarthy, a small town about 15 miles from the sign in the gravel, the first sound you are likely to hear is Jerry Miller whistling. The sound ripples, deliberate whole drops of music, struck as if by a careful whittler off a vaguely familiar bar of tune, through the little balsam poplars that grow here as thick as grass. Miller rises early, and the music trails him as he waters the tomatoes and zucchini in the greenhouse or checks the hydraulic ram or feeds the chickens. And despite the eternal putter from Ron Anderson's diesel generator, the dominance of this little town by the sound of one man whistling fills the morning with peace.

Miller is tall, with a head of curly, dark hair, a moustache and an air of controlled wariness, like a tame wolf. He is 37 years old. When he was in high school in western Nebraska he wrote a term paper on Alaska and it stirred his restlessness. "It was just a feeling of it being a place that was still—I hate to use the word frontier—a place that hadn't been crossed, that was open." When he first came up in 1959 the gap between the reality and the dream was small enough to keep him enthralled, and he returned for good in 1961. But over the years, while he worked as an airline mechanic in Fairbanks, he watched the chances to get land dwindle, and he began to grow bitter. "I lived up here for long enough with a great desire to live in the country, to have a little spot where I could live. It's always been impossible, it's always been out of reach. You just see people hopelessly waiting with their hands tied. I came up here to *live*. I'm *just now* getting close to it, after 20 years."

McCarthy is a reviving ghost town nestled in young trees at the foot of the Kennicott Glacier, a vast field of gravel-covered ice that extends north of the town for miles, until the clean ice itself emerges from the dirt and climbs into the Wrangell Mountains in huge, luminescent falls. The glacier looks like an incredible mine tailing; in fact, visitors to the old Kennecott Copper Mine near McCarthy, where the actual spoils are almost invisible, often look out across the barren, rocky ridges of the glacier and shake their heads sadly at the destruction wrought by human greed.

We flew down here yesterday in my single-engine Cessna Cardinal, slipping through the Chickaloon Pass just behind a storm, through showers—snow pellets rattling on the plexiglass—until we saw the huge mass of the base of the Wrangells illuminated by sun behind the black strings of a squall.

We flew for two and a half hours at 110 knots, and finally we saw McCarthy, lying so close under the foot of the glacier that it seemed in imminent danger of being scraped away. This is an illusion, however; the town itself is one of the older non-native villages of Alaska. It was built to provide various services—legitimate and otherwise—to the Kennecott mine, which flourished nearby from 1911 to 1938 after the construction of a railroad that was hardly less challenging to build than this decade's oil pipeline.

Today McCarthy is a town of dirt streets and weatherbeaten buildings, many leaning in various directions, as if lame. Its overwhelming attraction—other than its spectacular location—is that the automobile bridge connecting it to a very bad road to Anchorage was washed out several years ago. If you don't fly to McCarthy the only way to get here now is to drive to the end of that road, park, cross the roaring waters of Kennicott Creek on a hand-pulled cable tram, then walk the last quarter mile into town. This barrier, physically insignificant, is psychologically vast. Shorn of all access to your car—symbol of mobility —you find yourself in a different world. It is not at all like backpacking, in which you make a voluntary renunciation of the automobile; McCarthy is a living town, and though an occasional elderly truck mumbles through its streets, the realization that the town's identity does not revolve around the car gives you a curious sense of freedom.

"How far's the nearest town?" Scott asks Miller.

"You mean with a telephone? One hundred miles."

"Wow. They got electricity out here?"

"No."

"Wow."

Scott spends much of his time here helping pull people back and forth across the creek on the tram, enthralled by this primitive link and barrier.

I spend much of my time talking to Jerry Miller, who moved to McCarthy because he could get land here. He bought the McCarthy Lodge, a bar, restaurant, hotel and center of commerce, then built a log cabin about two blocks away. He is determined to be self-sufficient; he is trying to sell the lodge so

Opposite: Scott Evans crossing Glacier Creek; debris at nearby homestead; old Kennecott mine

he can give himself full time to the necessary life. It is now getting close. But he remains frustrated, and not far down in him is a well of anger, a source replenished daily by the frustration he sees in others.

"You should sit in the lodge one day," he says, "and count all the people who come in asking for land. You'd be surprised how many people—they have an apartment in Anchorage and they're living on a dream that some day they'll have a cabin. I feel sorry for these people. The average guy, he is forever forbidden from having land in Alaska. Where there is private land, it's too expensive. Of all the states we're the last that should have that excuse."

"I feel sorry for these people. The average guy, he is forever forbidden from having land in Alaska"

Alaska's land troubles began long before statehood, but their most recent and severe incarnation began in 1966 when Stewart Udall, the Secretary of the Interior, froze the transfer of federal lands into private hands until a native land settlement act could be passed. That eliminated the opportunity to homestead in Alaska, although it did not extinguish that dream. But in 1971, when a native land claims settlement was finally passed by Congress, it contained the infamous d-2 section that further froze 80 million acres of federal lands until a national interest lands bill could be passed. Meanwhile, the state government was slowly selecting and getting title to part of the 104 million acres it was given in 1958 by the statehood act. Very slowly. After 19 years the state has only received title to about one-third of this promised land, and of that, only about one million acres of land in the entire state has sifted through into private hands. Although this works out to a per-capita private land ownership similar to California's—two-and-a-half acres a person—it is less than 3 percent of Alaska.

In Alaska land hunger is a religion, something you do not necessarily give up just because you have obtained the blessing of some acreage. The restlessness that brought you here was the restlessness of the homesteader. And when the homesteading closed down you didn't lose the drive. So Miller is a kind of bush apostle, and the creed he promotes is called the Beirne Homestead Initiative, Proposition 10 on the November ballot. This initiative, which is now fighting for its life before the Alaska Supreme Court after a lower court ruled it unconstitutional, is certain to pass if it makes it to the ballot. If the initiative ever becomes law it will, for the last time in the United States, give land away.

State Representative Mike Beirne is a friendly, mild, 52-year-old Republican pathologist. He is the author of the Beirne Initiative, which would open up 30 million acres of Alaska land to public acquisition by February 1979.

The Beirne Initiative, however, has very little to do with homesteading. Its entire purpose is simply to give land away; the use of the word homestead is political. The concept of homesteading involves a process of "proving up" on land: living on it, building on it and cultivating it for a period of years before you can call it your own. But the Beirne Initiative has no such requirement. All you have to be is an Alaskan resident for three or more years and you qualify. What you get for this luck of residency is generous: For three years in the state you can get 40 acres; for five years 80 acres and for 10 years 160 acres. All you have to do is find your land, pay a $100 filing fee, and, within five years, survey it. Once it's surveyed, it's yours.

This approach has a few problems —for instance, the lack of proving up requirements makes the acquisition of large acreages by development corporations through dummy homesteaders a simple matter.

But the biggest fear that opponents of the Beirne Initiative have — and they include a broad spectrum of conservation-oriented political groups — is that only the residency requirements will be found unconstitutional.

"There are two possibilities," said Avrum Gross, state attorney general. "The Supreme Court could say the requirements are unconstitutional and throw out the whole bill, or it could strike down the residency requirements and leave the whole bill. Then we'd have our version of the Oklahoma land rush. That would be catastrophic."

Here we go: February 1979. The Alaskan Highway is full of pickup trucks loaded with mattresses, chain saws, rifles and hard-eyed women. The woods are full of men on snowshoes, carrying stakes of lath, florescent engineers' tape, and revolvers. There are shouts of rage and pain, punctuated by gunfire, in the bush. Little Bell and Hughes helicopters whine from airports everywhere to hastily cleared heliports, loading and unloading homestakers hired by every land-development corporation in California. The director of the state division of lands and four deputies commit suicide on consecutive days. A Los Angeles investment firm announces the sale of "Homestead Kits," each of which consists of a one-way fare to Fairbanks and (to be picked up on arrival), a prepaid filing fee, a dacron parka, a pair of snowshoes, a 1:1,000,000 map of Alaska, 20 pounds of freeze-dried moose stew, a polyester sleeping bag, a book of "Jack London" matches and a priority position in the line standing in front of the division of lands office in Anchorage.

A sample of headlines from the *Anchorage Daily News*:

"Six die in homestead brawl"

"National Guard called out in Tanana"

"Legislative session stalled; lawmakers out homesteading"

"*News* learns homestead opponent stakes claim"

"Land Rush: Conflict, tragedy, exploitation, corruption, war (A series in 28 parts)"

A sample of headlines from *The Anchorage Times*:

"State Population Up 58%!"

"'I've Got Mine!' Shouts Youngest Homesteader"

"Weapons Sales Boom in Anchorage; 'Not for Bear,' Laughs Dealer"

"Governor Praises Homestead Spirit"

"What Homesteaders Plan for Spring"

"Mr. Beirne, if the residency requirement were declared unconstitutional, wouldn't there be a kind of. . .ah . . .strong land rush from people in the lower 48?"

"Could be, yeah, could be. I think it helps to settle the state. You know, that's the question: Was opening the American West desirable? At the time you might not have been so keen about it. You might have wanted the buffalo to roam the prairies forever. You might have wanted to lock up the Rocky Mountains, you see? But today you're rather pleased that the American West was opened for settlement. The same thing is true of Alaska. That resistance today is coming from people with very short-sighted concepts. I'll tell you, Alaska is the American West of a hundred years ago."

Steve Wood has a laugh that would startle a hyena. When he snickers he goes "Hee, hee, hee, hee, hee," precisely the sound out of the comics, but when he laughs it is as if someone had told him the joke of the century then punched him in the stomach. He gasps for mirth, his mouth wide open and his head back. It adds to his reputation, which he relishes, of being slightly strange.

Wood, 27, lives fives miles from McCarthy in a tiny house at the site of the old Kennecott Mine, where red-and-white buildings stack up against the hillside like discarded cardboard boxes. "I live like a f---ing king," he says. "I look

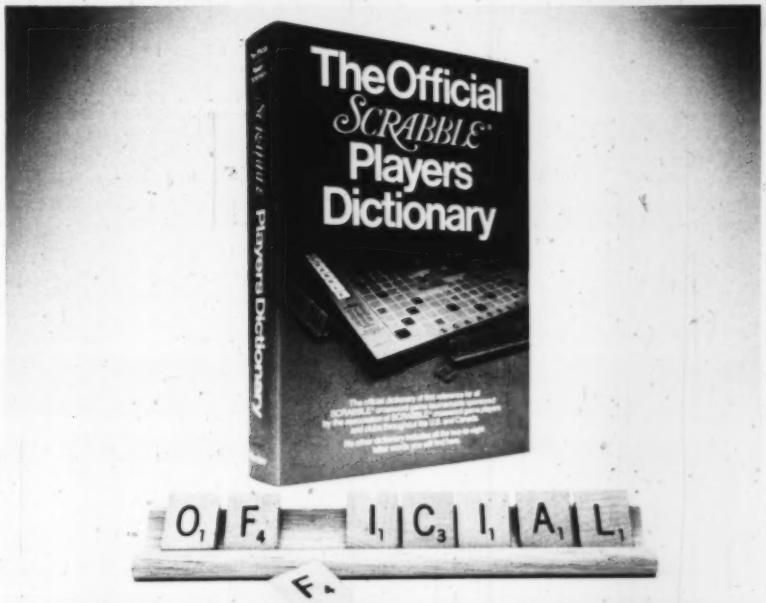
out over the f---ing mountains and I chop my f---ing wood and I say all f---ing right." Far more than Maloney, Wood fits my image of the Old West pioneer, updated to 1978: Intelligent, restless, out of sync with the dominant society. He was born and raised in California, he is educated to the point of a masters in biology, and he is dissatisfied.

"To tell you the truth, I couldn't handle it down there any more," he says. "I took some LSD in Jackson, Wyoming and started across the country helping people. Hee, hee, hee, hee, hee. I started looking at the American Southwest, and I said: 'This is crazy.' I feel really at odds with the culture I'm in. It seems to be oriented with foolish things." If the lure west a hundred years ago was gold, to people like Wood, products of affluence, the lure to Alaska is the different way of life. The nearest thing to a creed in Wood's flexible mind, it seems, is basic: "The sooner we learn to live with less the better off we'll be. Up here I lived all winter on 10 gallons of Blazo and 15 gallons of kerosene. My plan is to get a hunk of land with a southern exposure. It's getting to the point where it feels like it's a personal responsibility of being alive that you've got to help make the spaceship work."

Trapped too long by seriousness, his laugh erupts. He is balancing on a rock outside the McCarthy Lodge, wobbling around with his hands in the pockets of a blue down jacket that is patched on the shoulder with duct tape, his head in a floppy stocking cap. He recovers from the laugh and gets serious again. "I sleep when I want to, I eat when I'm hungry. Gol-lee, I found that when you finally divorce yourself from time, you start tuning in to what's around you."

Wood needs land more than Miller; he has nothing here but a brief tenancy in a small cabin. "All I need is a home, a place to chop some trees, build a cabin and get my supplies in. But there are No Trespassing signs everywhere." Oddly, however, he does not like the Beirne Initiative. "It doesn't take into account anything the land has to offer. It takes away the complete responsibility toward the land itself and puts it into the hands of the dollar. But gol-lee, if it passes I'd be stupid not to file under it. Hee, hee, hee, hee, hee."

Wood, whose only complaint about the McCarthy area is "the lack of women and the craziness of the community," has a recurring dream. He does not explain whether it is one he manufactures or one that comes to him in the night. It is an image of Huntington Beach, California, and in all the little jammed up subdivisions the roads are plowed up to footpaths in the centers, and vegetables are growing where the tarmac was. In all the yards where there were lawns are parked Volkswagen buses, pointed to the sun, with beans growing out the win-



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dows. He laughs and laughs. "All those tracts in L. A. going to look different. We've got a hell of a future before us, if we don't blow it up."

You can't separate the Beirne Initiative from the d-2 lands controversy; the first is partly a backlash to the second, and they are inextricably tangled. "The one thing the Beirne Initiative will do,"

"To tell you the truth, I couldn't handle it down there any more"—*Steve Wood*

one Juneau legislator told me sadly, "is ensure passage of d-2 legislation, because Congress will see what a mess we're making of the land on our own." So one morning when I fly out to a nearby canyon to see an area that will almost certainly be within the proposed national park, I am surprised, not by the scenic beauty, but by an attack of land hunger of my own.

On that morning, Scott and I fly around a ridge from McCarthy and up the Chitistone Canyon, over the sign bulldozed in the gravel and up to a tributary canyon called Glacier Creek. Where the creek enters the Chitistone there is a small airstrip, 2,000 feet of reasonably even gravel. I dry my palms on my jeans and manage to set the plane down on the stony threshhold and as the engine stops and the gyroscopes do their little song of sleep, I exult: This is the most remote place I have ever been in my life. I tell Scott, but he is not impressed. So? He is still thanking God he's just alive.

All around us mountains boom. It is a country of no compromise: Everything is either flat or on end. The brown rock, interspersed with zones bearing copper, juts up from streambeds that fill a mile of wide valley with naked gravel. These valley floors are flat, planed by the seasonal blade of the flood, and where the water triumphs each year nothing grows. It is just gravel and sand, and when we walk across it looking for the river in a maze of false channels, we find the day-old footprints of a small bear. Out here, away from the softening influence of the town, this land is crude, almost brutal in its power. It is all slabs and folds and uplifts. It is a country still being carved; the chips are on the floor.

We hike on the valley, Glacier Creek. An old road dips through washes and out again and ends at a cut where the water has washed it away. Two cables, the remains of a passenger tram, lead across the racing stream. They span about 75 feet. Scott looks at me and grins. If he was not here I would turn back. "OK," I say, "If you go first." We walk across the stream on the wires, dipping and swaying with each step. Watching me cross, Scott laughs and laughs.

On the other side of Glacier Creek is a deserted homestead. Try as I may, I cannot seem to be offended by the human garbage that clutters the place up: Oil drums, old saw blades, a bundle of mining bits bound together by thin wire, a full box of blasting caps, a mound of old newspapers, still rolled. Perhaps my tolerance is there because this debris is so truly insignificant against the size of the country that the relationship is satisfying. I probe into the newspapers, which are stained a dusty white on the outside, by years of snow and thaw, but inside are nearly new: They are copies of *The Anchorage Times*. I think of Robert Atwood. We left Anchorage before an arbitration decision was reached; we will learn later that the decision largely favored the *Anchorage Daily News*, so the morning paper survives, slimly, while it pursues its lawsuit and new sources of funds. I unroll a paper: "DEAN SAYS NIXON KNEW" Another: "DRAFT MAY END IN JULY"

The old cabin is locked by a hinge nailed to the door and the frame. On the door is a letter from an attorney: "Notice is hereby given that the undersigned Martin Radovan on the Ninth day of October 1970, staked 70 lode mining claims known as the Binocular Group in Radovan Gulch . . ." Near it is a message scrawled on cardboard and tacked to the door. It is dated September 15, 1971: "Please do not break in my home. I will be Back in a few days. Martin F. Radovan."

Somewhere behind the cabin a spring creek drops down a hillside in a tumble of clear sound. I explore the woods and find the water, spilling in foam between roots. I drink from it. It is cold, and it tastes faintly of moss. I climb the hillside a few yards. Above me spires of mountain lift to bare rock, bright edges lit against shadows. Beyond the cabins now I can see where the valley bends north. There at its head are ice fields and far higher peaks, the Twaharpies, a pale blue, yellow and green cascade of light. From there comes the wind, the air that feels so pure.

In a rush, like the cold water, breathless, I know: I could live here. Oh, Lord, how I could live here. Below I can see Scott exploring among the buildings; I feel suspended above him, above time, by this swift longing. "In a wild environment," wilderness philosopher Fred Meader once wrote, "our first response is one of affirmation." I am swept away by it, by the glitter of the water, by the light. I could live here, all the rest of my life. And so, for this moment, I too am torn by land hunger. Is it avarice or genuine need? I don't know.

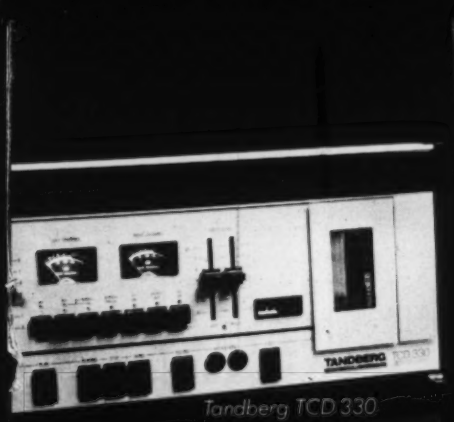
Walking back down to the wire crossing, I remember something that Judy Miller, Jerry's wife, said last night. She had moved to Alaska from California, full of environmentalist notions spawned during backpacking trips to Yosemite National Park. When she arrived in McCarthy by chance a couple of days after getting to the state, all her notions began to crumble. She never made it back to Anchorage; she settled here. "When I was in California and I went into the country, it wasn't what I wanted. All along what I really wanted was to be able to *live* in a situation like that. In this state if you go and put all that land out of reach, what that does is deny what I wanted."

In the McCarthy Lodge, Miller and Wood and I are talking about Beirne, parks and wilderness. Miller points out that parks promote consumptive use of resources, because they encourage tourists to spend great sums of fuel to race up here from California or New York for two weeks of intense relaxation, then race back. "You're not encouraging people to come here, live on the land in an energy conserving lifestyle. What happens when there's not enough fuel to bring jumbo jets up here any more? All this place will be is an asset to somebody who wants to dream about walking somewhere where nobody has been before." Wood watches him through narrowed eyes, his beard down on his chest. He appears to be thinking of somewhere else.

What about the people who need to dream about coming up here to live in that better lifestyle, I ask, thinking about Judy's comments. How do you maintain that asset if you just give all the land away? Miller seems ready to respond.

But Wood's laugh interrupts. It is disconcerting, as if a bomb has gone off in his mind. As we've been talking, he's been back in his vision of Huntington Beach, watching the girls hoe in the streets and the beans growing out of the Volkswagens. His laughter interrupts the flow of our conversation, which has been getting insufferably earnest.

"Gol-lee," he says with a giggle. "I'm willing to give them their dreams up here, if they'll give me mine down there. Hee, hee, hee, hee, hee."



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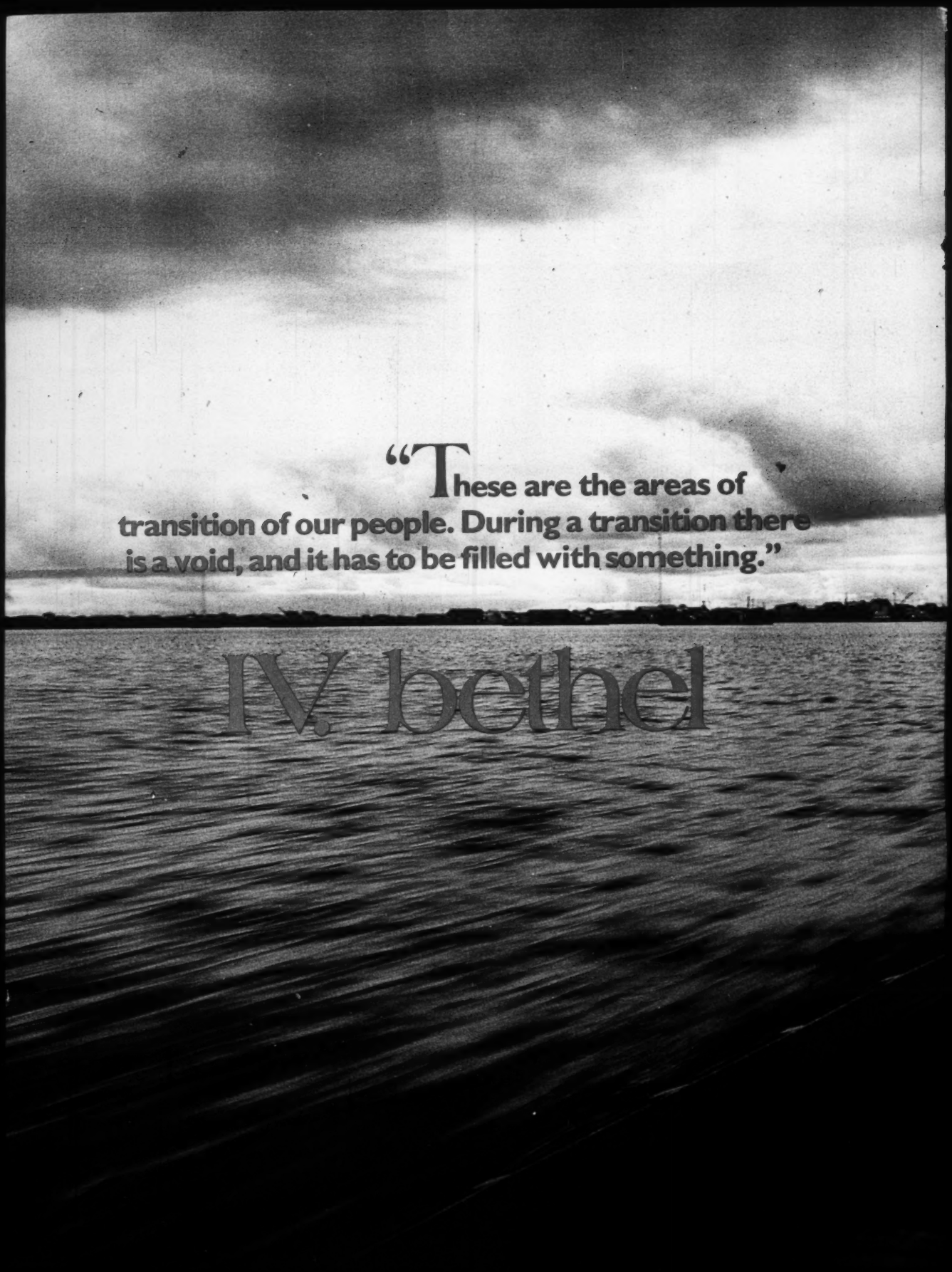
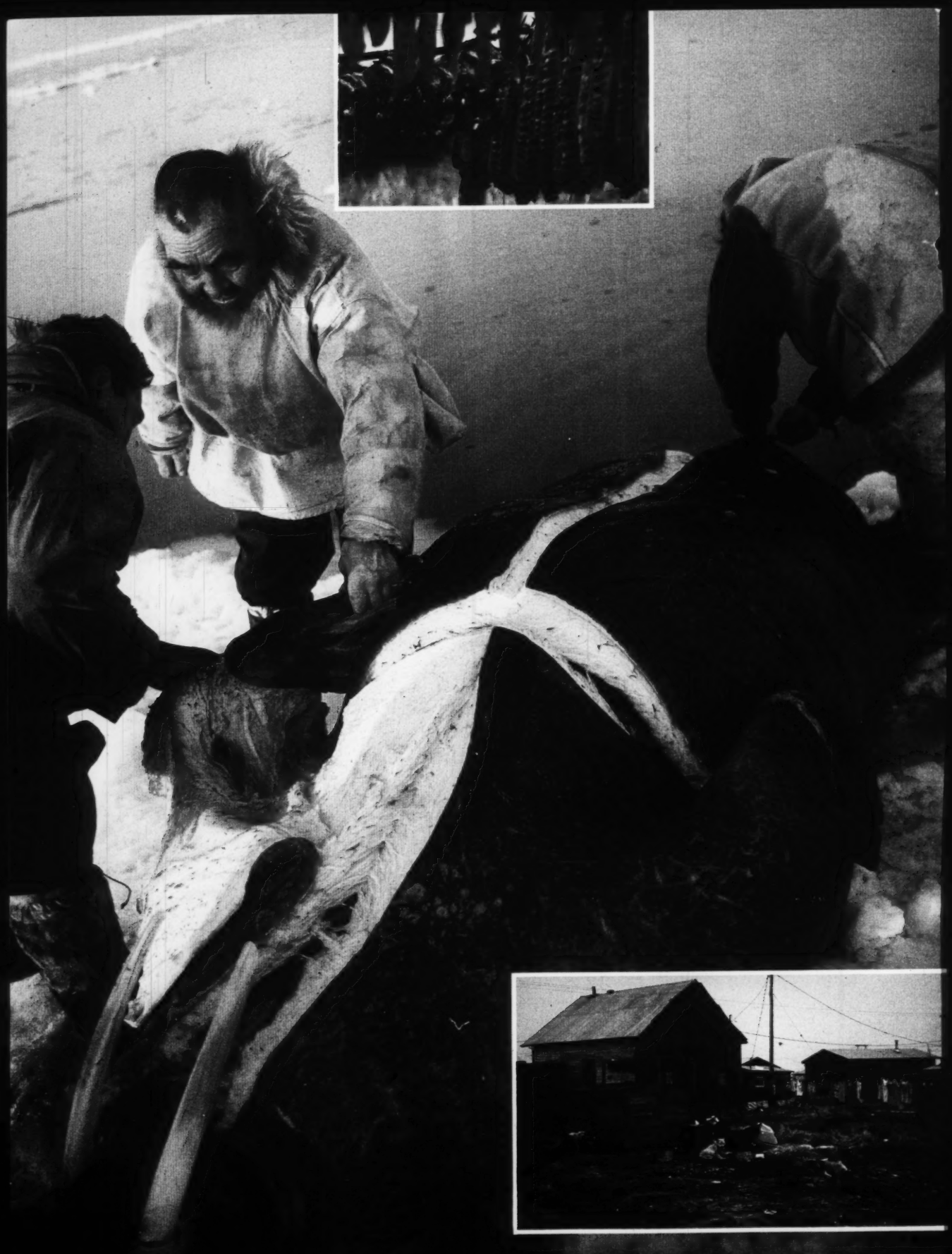

"These are the areas of transition of our people. During a transition there is a void, and it has to be filled with something."
IV. bethel



There are a lot of weapons in Fred Notti's Anchorage office. On the west wall are three high-powered hunting bows, all gleaming laminate and string. Overhead on the north wall is a group of skin and wooden masks, the old psychological weapons of the Eskimo Shaman culture, solemn and fierce. And on the east wall is an arrangement of Third Reich edged weapons: Bayonets, unsheathed; what appear to be daggers, stained, I hope, by age; and a long, curved sabre. In the centre of these blades is a small red flag, in its center, a black swastika.

Surrounded by these instruments of death and torture, Fred Notti does not need to be threatening. In fact, he seems genial. He grins widely, a stocky man with greying hair and a moustache, and he says with pleasure:

"The first writer in here wrote 'Fred Notti, sitting behind his thousand-dollar desk....' If I see him again I'll break his nose." He laughs. I laugh. The tall, blonde press secretary laughs. Notti sits on the edge of what looks like a $2 thousand desk.

Fred Notti is the vice president, finance, of Calista Corporation. Nothing special about Calista: Total assets, $48 million. Total liabilities, $27 million. Net loss per share in 1977: $1.71. Total shares outstanding: 1,319,700. Active in hotel construction, land development, commercial fishing, and petrochemical development.

There is nothing special about Calista, that is, except for one thing: It is owned and controlled by 13,000 Alaskan Eskimos, many of whom, until 1971, had not heard of the word "proxy." And many of whom are beginning now to wish they never had.

Calista Corporation, which represents the Eskimos of a huge area of Western Alaska centered on the town of Bethel, is part of the last war between the United States and the aborigines of the North American continent. Except this time it is not being fought by the cavalry. The natives of Alaska are being attacked by that ultimate weapon of American economics: The corporation. In 1971, in what looked like the grandest gesture of conciliation ever made by a conquering people to a group of aboriginal races, the United States settled the claims of Alaska's 75,000 Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts by giving them 44 million acres of land, $1 billion—and corporate structure. So far it is not clear whether the natives will beat the corporations and turn them to the ends they choose or whether the corporations, winning, will vanquish the culture, destroy the heritage and erode the wealth of the natives.

"Our anticipated income in 15 years will be $1 billion net," Fred Notti says with a grin. "Our losses so far have been gigantic not so much because of mismanagement but because of corrupt management, but I think in general Calista is on very good footing now."

The press secretary smiles. She is from Georgia.

"Calista is doing such a *wonderful* job for society," she says. "They have done just a *tremendous* amount of good for people. The Eskimos now have a helping hand. The way of life for people at Bethel has just greatly improved."

Have you been to Bethel? I ask her.

"Not yet."

Bethel is 400 air miles from Anchorage, due west. If you tried to drive it you'd be gone a long time. No roads. When Scott and I leave for Bethel in my Cessna, low clouds and a mixture of snow and rain force us to divert to the south, where we ride the west edge of the Cook Inlet for about 80 miles, then duck in the narrow mouth of the aerial route through the Aleutian Range known as Lake Clark Pass. Scott slept all the way from Anchorage, and now he awakens on the air bumps thrown up by the southwest wind. He opens his eyes to sheer magnificence. Forced low by the clouds, we skim glaciers and ridges sharp as blades. The icefall we cross at a few hundred feet is all buckled and cracked; in the crevices the ice is pale green and seems to glow faintly in the flat light. We bounce on rough air over the ridges and a drizzle cloaks the view forward, but it is impossible to be afraid. There is too much to see. This is a part of the proposed Lake Clark National Park, and it deserves any protection it can get.

The rain does not let up as we probe our way through the canyon. The visibility is about five miles. The pass itself is a glacier, a tongue of ice that laps out into the canyon floor and sends milky streams east and west. Beyond it the canyon is a hall of majesty. Classically U-shaped, it proceeds directly southwest, its flat floor bending swiftly upward on each side into nearly vertical walls. "I have never seen anywhere so green," Scott says. The green is seamed with slender waterfalls that tumble down the cliffs in threads of white; above, where the clouds are torn by their contact with the land, we see patches of bare rock. These views are sudden and brief, and flying through here becomes like walking a trail between chasms; each opening hits us like a shot of vertigo, as the solid overcast is punctured by a glimpse of a vault of stone.

Lake Clark itself is pale turquoise with glacial silt. As we approach the point at which the canyon widens we are treated to a scenic jewel. To our left, unheralded by any advance warning, a waterfall of perhaps 150 feet leaps out in a perfect narrow curtain 15 feet wide and falls in shredding symmetry to a pool. Behind it, opening into darkness, is a cavern, carved by the years of mist and divided by the stream now into the smooth, rounded shape of a heart. Weeks later Scott will remember the waterfall and the cave and will say, with sentiment unusual in any 16-year-old boy: "That was the most beautiful place I ever seen."

"The white settlers say they want a simpler way of life, that's why they're coming. But they're adding to the complexity"—*Tony Vasca*

We fly on, past the towns of New Stuyahok and Ekwok, where tiny groups of houses cling to the banks of the Nushagak River, the buildings clustered tightly as if afraid of the immensity around them; then up to 7,000 feet over the last range of mountains before the Bering Sea, where a row of narrow lakes probes up into the hills like a reaching hand. Lake Aleknagik, Lake Nerka, Lake Beverley, Lake Kulik, Nuyakuk Lake, Tikchik Lake, Chauekuktuli Lake. And then the land opens out and goes flat, as if rolled, and we are at last on the western plain, on the great delta of the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers.

When you come in from Anchorage, where mountains are established in the margins of your mind, the open sky of Bethel seems to curve way down around the side of the earth. You see the tops of clouds on the horizon. The Kuskokwim rolls past in lazy gray swirls, divided and joined by little channels that curl between banks of rich, dark earth. From the water a dense brush of willow and alder fences off the land.

One tree is native to Bethel. It is a single spruce that grows just outside of town and is immortalized by a sign that proclaims it "The Bethel National Forest." The rest of the land is covered by tundra. The town itself is a concentra-

Preceding pages: Showalter Smith, with Bethel in background. Opposite: scenes of Bethel

tion of ragged buildings, the older ones—plywood and tarpaper—listing and cracking on permafrost that is 400 to 500 feet thick, and the newer ones—dusty prefabs—mounted on short stilts. In one modern housing development water and sewer services run from house to house in large galvanized pipes, above ground, but most homes are graced with "honey buckets," little garbage-pail toilets whose contents are picked up regularly by the same municipal agency that delivers drinking water. Legally, Bethel is alcoholically dry, as are many native communities. (Even the old high-time gold rush town of Nome has a prohibition bill on this year's ballot.)But if you want, you can find a fifth in Bethel, for about $40. Bethel, center of commerce and government agency headquarters for an area of thousands of square miles, is a functional town, to be complimentary; there is no grace or beauty to its architecture and no drama to its setting. But this delta country is like the desert: It earns a passionate and—it seems at first—unreasonable affection from its people.

"Oil holds a lot of power: pull a string and you don't know who will pop up. The whole White House did"

"If I could teach at the University of California and live in Bethel, I'd be fine," says Tony Vasca, a 29-year-old Eskimo who is working toward his Ph.D. in anthropology from Stanford. "San Francisco is one of the best cities I've lived in, but it's not home."

Near a fork in the only paved road in Bethel is the modular housing unit occupied by a nonprofit organization called the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP). Fifty-six villages in the Bethel area—fully a quarter of the native villages in Alaska—belong to AVCP. In this building, which sways slightly on its pillars when someone walks through it, I am treated with initial caution, like an unfamiliar mushroom. After some tacit communication among the staff, I am handed off to an Eskimo named Showalter Smith, who would obviously rather do something else but has too good a nature to discard me altogether. I hope that his apparent mild friendliness is not, as a few psychological anthropologists have suggested of the Eskimo in general, "evidence of a need to appease. . .founded in pathological narcissism."

I prefer to think of Smith as simply a pleasant personality; as I get to know him I find him enigmatic. He listens politely to my questions—Is the native claims act a success? Are profit-making corporations filling your needs? What is happening to your culture?—but his attention is not complete. A piece of his mind is elsewhere. He leans back in his chair, feet on the desk, smoking a Tareyton. He wears Levis, an orange turtleneck, silver-rimmed glasses, a slender moustache and a detached look caught somewhere between pain and sardonic amusement.

"We are going through a stage of transition," he says precisely. English is natural to him—when he was going to elementary school in his home village on Nunivak Island, the teacher made you sit in the corner if you slipped into Yupik, and Showalter was never so punished. "It is not going to be finalized overnight."

The natives of Alaska have been enduring transition for generations. Since the Russians arrived in the middle of the eighteenth century the regular changes imposed by outside civilizations have become a part of the culture itself. Beads, guns, nets, Christianity, law enforcement, television. But the modern transition—in which the big change is that the changes are being imposed not only by whites but by the natives themselves—began not long before Showalter Smith was graduated from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, "the first one from my village ever to have a college education." In the late sixties the natives, drawing power from new unity and from the fact that native title to the state had never been extinguished by treaty, war or law, tangled the whole state in a net of overlapping claims. In 1967 and 1968, the first bills attempting to settle this disturbance were proposed in Congress, where they sputtered briefly and died, and in 1969, while Smith was working for the Alaska Federation of Natives, the concept of profit-making corporations was being developed.

"We got to playing with the idea of a corporation," said David M. Hickock, who was a member of a federal field committee that researched the claims and suggested solutions. "Basically the corporation as a device is very socialistic; as a device of common input it's very communal. We thought that might work."

But the committee was thinking generally of nonprofit corporations; the concept of profit was introduced by the natives themselves through a task force headed by a young state representative named Willie Hensley. He is now one of the best-known native leaders in the state, and one of the few recognized nationally.

"A lot of native people saw the trust approach as a throwback to the days the feds ran the Indian reservations as though they were concentration camps," Hensley said over an early breakfast at the Anchorage Westward Hilton, which is owned by the Bristol Bay Native Corporation. "The idea we had was that through the settlement act, lands and monies would be owned by the people, and a corporation can hold lands and monies and make investments." Hensley, 37, a forceful man who is now president of United Bank Alaska, a native-owned bank, was wearing a three-piece dark blue pinstriped suit and carefully styled hair just slightly salted with grey. "I don't always dress like this," he said, sensitive to the term "Brooks Brothers Native" that has been applied to him and other native leaders to imply cultural betrayal. "Sometimes I wear jeans."

"The corporate system was also a selling tool in Congress," he continued. "A lot of conservatives liked to see us in a sink or swim situation. They could say 'Here's 40 million acres we're going to get back anyway.'"

The idea of superimposing a corporate culture on a population that was still learning to understand the concept of land ownership may also have appealed to the oil industry which, because the claims blocked the Alaska pipeline, suddenly wanted a settlement. "The oil role [in passing the claims act] was significant," Hensley said. "Oil holds a lot of power; pull a string and you don't know who will pop up. The whole White House did. We've been uneasy antagonists and bedfellows since."

The settlement was signed in December 1971. Called the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), it gave the natives 44 million acres of land, $962.5 million, and established 12 regional and 221 village corporations to spend the money and use the land. Each native in Alaska would become a shareholder in at least one of these corporations. It was a massive and incredible settlement, unprecedented in size and concept, but, overshadowed by the pipeline battle itself, it never received the publicity it deserved. "For so extraordinary an event it was very little heralded," said Robert Arnold, author of the book *Alaska Native Land Claims*. Perhaps it was never heralded because every time a reporter tried to get through the act itself he or she became fatally tangled, like a salmon in a gill net, in the crisscrossed strands of subsections, subparagraphs and parenthetical allusions.

"Have you noticed that it is all kind of complicated?" Arnold said mildly. "Sort of beyond belief?" Some natives started calling the settlement the "Lawyer's Relief Act of 1971." The regional corporations have already spent about 10 percent of the settlement funds they have received so far in legal fees, just to clarify the act.

If the assets of the 12 corporations had been pooled in one instead, as was once contemplated, that corporation would have been the 11th largest in the world. But the natives who suddenly acquired this wealth and responsibility were thrown into demanding executive positions with almost no preparation and then left to fight their way to knowledge with very little help. There was no significant attempt on the part of Congress or the bureaucracy to provide training or assistance to the new native capitalists.

"The natives were practically abandoned," said David Hickock. "When the bill was passed, the Department of Interior sent everybody out into the field to look at the national interest [d-2] lands. I never thought that was right."

"The government knew our vulnerability," Fred Notti said. "If the government really had a true concern it should have offered a close monitoring system. I have been requesting from the day of passage that we had to have a senatorial monitoring system. Very few regions were lucky enough to have shareholders who had the education and integrity to keep everything fairly stable."

Calista, apparently, was not one of those lucky regions, although there is argument over whether it was the shareholders, boards or management that were most responsible for its troubles. It got overextended in the construction of a $35 million Sheraton Hotel in downtown Anchorage, which stood in red skeletal splendor for almost the entire two months I was in Alaska, untouched by crane or rivet, until the company was bailed out by a $19.5 million loan from Crocker National Bank. Calista poured $16 million into a land development scheme that was taken on because of friendship rather than economic strength, and has realized very little profit. At one point its management was even chasing down a phantom helicopter that had been purchased without authorization. (The helicopter was found some months later.) "We took out the problem employees," Notti said with a grin. I glanced at the bayonets. I'm sure the stain was just rust.

Notti blames Calista's troubles quite simply, on corruption. "We have been swamped by very unethical people," he said. "In the beginning I had offers of $40,000 a week if I'd put together deals. The losses directly attributable to corruption and mismanagement are around $6 million."

The Calista Corporation is not alone. A recent financial analysis of the corporations showed that seven of the 12 had net losses last year, and it predicted that "the next five years may well be the 'last' five years for some ANCSA corporations. Indeed, the possibilities of technical insolvency [are] conceivable even today in a few cases." One corporation, Bering Straits, is already fighting a suit by a creditor who is demanding involuntary bankruptcy. The problems that led to this situation, the report said, include the expenses of legally clarifying ambiguous and complex parts of the act, "conflicting and often unreasonable shareholder expectations. . .intuitive, rather than rational, decision making . . .patrimonial personnel policies . . .[poor] attitudes towards planning . . . [and] uncertain resource endowment." The last comment refers to the problem the corporations are having obtaining the land promised by the act. So far, seven years after its passage, the corporations have received only about 10 percent of the 44 million acres of federal land the act gave them. Significantly, most of the land conveyed is in the area administered by the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, where there is likely to be oil.

Nobody seems to know what would happen if a native corporation goes under. Nobody really knows what will happen to the corporations or to the land as the claims act grows older. Corporations and individuals may not sell stock until after 1991, but they may sell land when it is received, and the specter of an otherwise bankrupt corporation selling off all its peoples' land is a grim one. Similarly, will the native corporations that survive be taken over by non-native groups after the stock goes on the mar-

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ket? To avoid this, Willie Hensley would like to see each corporation have the right of first refusal on any block of shares that comes on the market, but that is not now a part of the law. To him the potential of the act he helped carve is worth the risks—the transition to the monetary system was inevitable, and this gives the natives control.

"Historically speaking, native groups have not done well," he said. "They lost a continent. We were going the same direction. If we had done nothing, we would have lost the land, and we would have continued to have the worst housing, the worst education, the worst medical care. Now, on the other hand, we have the potential of retaining the land, the potential to make an adequate transition from subsistence living to whatever the people want. Some of the corporations will be successful; others may go bankrupt. Who knows? Maybe 100 years from now we *will* have lost the land. At least it will not have happened in one fell swoop." Hensley is not arrogant enough to mention the other possibility: That if many of the corporations are as successful as the land they control is vast, the rest of us in the other states of the Union could be looking at some control over our lives by the Alaskan natives rather than the other way around. But he is ambitious enough to think it.

"Historically speaking, native groups have not done well. They lost a continent"

"The natives are learning more about corporate entities than most Americans," he continued. "In order to survive in the U.S. you have to understand credit and financing, and the native people are more closely connected with corporations than most Americans. The corporation is a political entity, a social entity, a cultural entity, sometimes almost a religious entity."

Transition. Showalter Smith is drawing a diagram for me on a sheet of legal notepaper. It is a long arrow, divided. At one end is "Culture," the old beliefs of the Eskimo. In the middle is "Christianity." The end, the point of the arrow, is "The Present," in which, he says, "our values are becoming more and more oriented toward the monetary system." Beyond the point of the arrow is nothing—a lot of unfilled, unpredictable directions.

"These are the areas of transition of our people," he says, gesturing down and up the arrow. Again he seems slightly amused, detached, as if he is an anthropologist discussing the fifth century B.C. "During a transition there is a void, and it has to be filled with something. Today there is alcoholism; today there are suicides and mental turmoil. Because of the transition, there is a void."

On a Friday evening Scott and I go out in Showalter's 18-foot riverboat to see subsistence living in action. It is king salmon season in Bethel. In the thick waters of the Kuskokwim River the huge fish are swimming east to spawn, fighting their way up into the tributary rivers: The Swift, the Stony, the Hoholitna, the Aniak, the George. Up some of the rivers, particularly the Holitna and the Hoholitna, young white people from the lower 48 are moving in to squat, often illegally, on native or federal ground in search of new ways of life. It is like subways passing in the dark. As the natives rumble along, reluctantly, toward capitalism, the kids are driving relentlessly back, demanding simplicity of themselves and subsistence from the land. There is turbulence in between. Tony Vasca sees the white settlers as intruders in the context of the settlement of the West, raising echoes of Mike Beirne.

"They come in with added tools and knowledge," Vasca said. "And they put extreme competition on the limited resources. They say they want a simpler way of life, that's why they're coming. But they're adding to the complexity."

Subsistence living is the core of the native way of life, the most obvious remnant of the old culture. The fish, the seal, the whale, the caribou. Once you give it up, you have gone to the white man. So subsistence is the issue of sentiment. It is tangled with the corporations—how do you turn a profit on land you must leave for the geese, for the caribou?—and it is apart from them. The natives resent the need even to define subsistence. "When you try, what you get is an esoteric definition," Showalter Smith says. "That's the key word, esoteric."

The trouble with subsistence is that in order to practice it you almost have to violate the game laws that are designed for sportsmen. For example, in Bethel recently, two natives returning from an out-of-season trip with two boxes of migratory birds were turned over to fish and wildlife authorities by the pilots who flew them. The incident is typically complicated: Although the authorities have agreed to look the other way when subsistence hunters break the law getting food, is it really subsistence when the hunters spend more money on the plane trip than the harvest itself is worth? And if it is still subsistence, then why isn't the expensive hunting trip taken by a white man from Anchorage, who plans to eat the meat, also subsistence?

Smith is wearing hip boots and a dark blue jacket. The boat is brown and made of plywood, with sides that angle steeply in to a flat bottom. He pushes us off into a shallow green slough and poles us through reeds to a place where the current shows in a surface ripple. On the shore he left a tangled net someone had taken and ruined. Now, as he transfers fuel from one tank to another, he says:

"My father always said, 'If you use something of somebody else in the country, be sure and tell that guy.' But those days are gone." The fuel drains through and makes a sucking noise. "But those days are gone."

On the shore, lines of laundry hang limply in drizzle. Scott sits in moody silence under a poncho; Bethel depresses him. He has just encountered an Eskimo child who laughed at him, never having seen a redhead before.

In the deeper water Showalter starts the outboard. It coughs and rumbles, and he has to kill it, raise it, and clear a red-checkered bread wrapper from the prop. On the shore there are rows of split salmon hung to dry; they are colored deep red, and the meat is sliced repeatedly across the fish to speed drying, so the wide strips look ragged. The first group of drying salmon looks odd, as if we had been driving across Iowa and had suddenly passed a farmhouse with several dozen beef halves hanging from the eaves. But we get used to the sight: The racks of salmon are everywhere, thousands of pounds of red meat, absorbing the sun, perspiring moisture, shrinking, toughening, ripening for winter. As we go down the river the drying salmon sail by on shore, rack after rack, an accumulation of abundance, security for the long night. It is a pleasure to think that this wealth has little to do with money, but it's an oversimplification, too. It does have something to do with poverty, and if wealth ever comes to the natives through their corporations, the subsistence life, with all its connotations of relationship to the land, may fade away into sport.

Earlier this afternoon I interviewed one of the more wealthy women of Bethel. Her affluence allows her to buy more groceries to supplement her subsistence diet than most other Bethel residents, who have to use food stamps, but her drift away from the pure subsistence life of her childhood is probably just a short distance ahead of her society.

"There's just no way we can go back to the subsistence way of living," she said. "Sure it's good to go home and have all the foods you grew up with. Sure, you get hungry for your dried fish and seal oil, but to say, man, this is what I want to live on all winter long—" she shook her head and smiled. "Now you can have your dried meat, but you can also stick a pizza in the oven for dessert."

We get out of the inlet and into the

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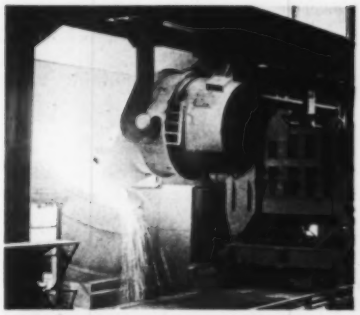

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big river, and Showalter stands in the stern and guns the motor. The river must be a mile across, and everywhere there are fishermen, usually two to a boat, accompanying their strings of buoys downstream. Subsistence living is still far from being a game, a playing at an older culture; the average delta Eskimo family is so far below the poverty level that it depends on subsistence foods for over 90 percent of its protein. The average harvest off the land and out of the rivers in 47 villages surveyed near Bethel recently was 9,281 pounds per family, of which about 75 percent was fish. The annual economic value of the subsistence harvest in Alaska has been estimated at between $30 and $50 million. That does not include benefits to mental health. "Village originated alcohol treatment and prevention programs," one delta physician wrote, "always include an emphasis on subsistence lifestyle . . . to replace . . . missing self-esteem and self-fulfillment."

"Now you can have your dried meat, but you can also stick a pizza in the oven for dinner"

As we roar down the river we watch the fishermen drift. If there is turmoil going on beneath the surface as the salmon encounter the nets, writhe, and die, on top it seems to be peaceful work: You set the net out and drift with it under this huge, broad sky. We stop at one boat in which two men nod and smile hugely at us—their English is poor. On the floorboards are two king salmon, one almost pure silver, the other silver edged with luminous blue. Each weighs about 30 pounds. Their scales are huge, like new-minted coins.

We stop at a fish camp. It is a small summer settlement, a group of buildings made of white canvas stretched on wooden frames. Near the beach on which we land is a small tree with a pair of tennis shoes in its branches; children are playing with a toy bulldozer in the sand; there are rows and rows of drying salmon hung on poles. Up close the red meat glistens. It looks polished and seems to have grain, like wood. This camp reminds me of an ad that appeared in the area newspaper, the *Tundra Drums*: "No fish camps or buildings of any sort may be built on any land claimed by Bethel Native Corporation, unless said person or persons first get Native people permission. . . ." Again the natives and the whites are going in opposite directions: While the whites demand more land to own, to survey off and call *mine*, the natives mourn the loss—through the settlement act as much as anything—of the open, unowned land that was once common to them as a people. The delta country is now split into a crazy checkerboard of ownership, divided between village claims, regional corporation claims, Bureau of Land Management land, and proposed d-2 wildlife refuge ground. About the only thing you know for sure when you step ashore is that you're trespassing. "It used to be all open tundra," one resident complained. "Now it all belongs to somebody."

We are invited into a building. We are given tea, and there are unwrapped sugar candies in a dish. This is a racially mixed camp; there is a black man and a white man here, each with an Eskimo wife. The white man is Chris Cooke, 34, Bethel's superior court judge. "People eat fish here like people in the lower 48 eat bread or potatoes," he says. "For every meal. Combined with seal oil, dipped in seal oil." Cooke is a graduate of Yale. He grins. "It's a long way from New Haven."

Showalter is talking about some psychic healers he recently visited in the Philippines. They opened up his body with their hands, he says, and they took tar out of his lungs and blood clots out of his knees, and they closed him back up again without a scar. The Eskimos watch and listen quietly. It seems out of the character of this place on the riverbank to be loud or quick. Philippino faith healers? Transition.

"The sad thing," Chris Cooke says, "The really sad thing, is that the native people have to fight like hell to stay where they are, to keep from compromising what they already have."

In the boat Showalter is silent. We roar up the open water again, even the summer breeze cold in the face. We enter a side stream and Showalter slows. "You don't believe what I said about the psychic healers, do you?" I cannot answer him at all.

Around the corner is another fish camp. There people are angling for whitefish from the shore with rod and line. We clamber up a bank and here is a middle-aged woman carrying a ladle made of a number 10 can nailed to a stick. Showalter speaks to her in Yupik and they laugh. "I was telling her," he explains, "that I'd brought along a couple of *gussuks* to take pictures of her in the steam bath." Behind the nearest canvas building is a low structure roofed of tin, with a stovepipe. The steam bath; you must have to sit low to get in it. "I took three, four steam baths when I got back from college," Showalter says, "but I got too used to the All-American shower. I go take a shower at the National Guard Armory now."

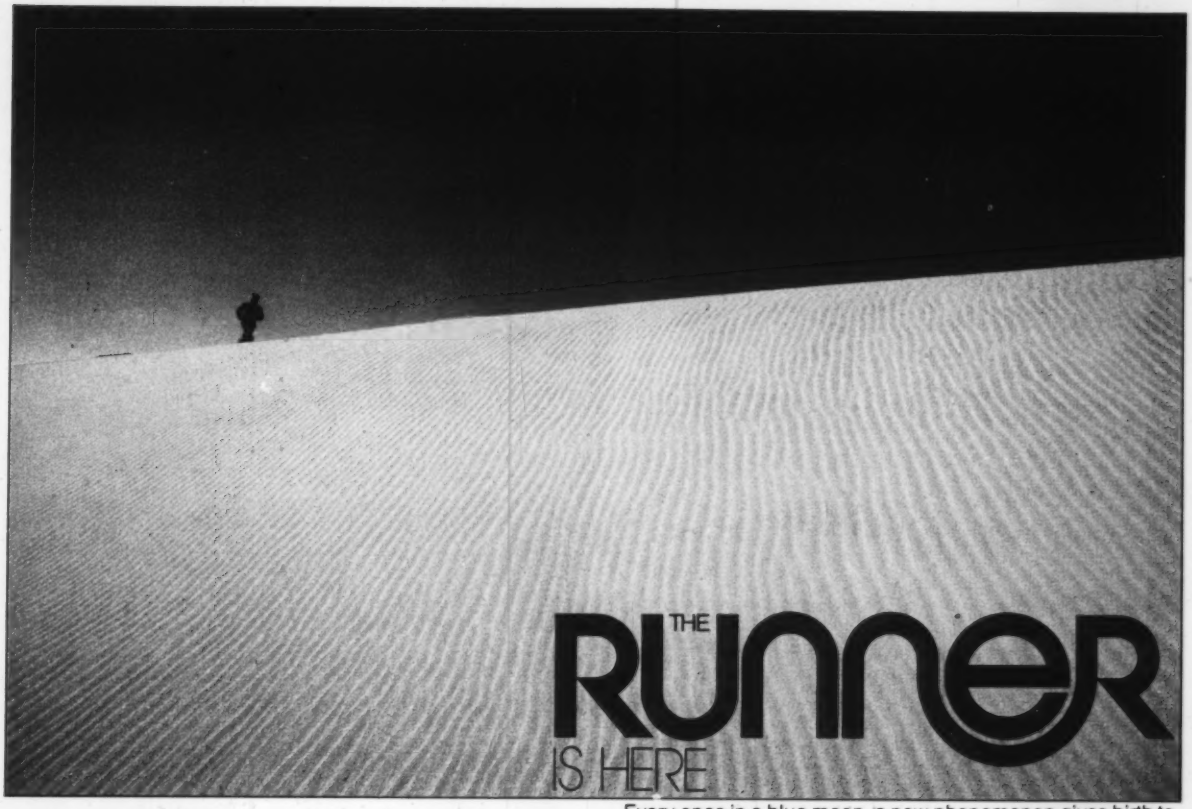
In a building a woman is eating fish. They are winter pike, caught through the ice and smoked. She eats them as if they were corn on the cob or chicken legs. In front of her is a Wesson Oil jar half full of seal oil. It is an amber color. Seal oil releases nine calories per gram; it is polyunsaturated—it does not lead to heart attacks. When Showalter yearns for the foods of his childhood it is for frozen seal liver dipped in seal oil.

The woman gnaws the pike meat off the curled skin. She and Showalter speak briefly in Yupik. There is a transistor radio playing John Denver's "I wanna live." There are radios everywhere in Bethel and almost every house has a television. The public television station has special permission to air commercial shows; the kids talk about Kung Fu and the Bionic Woman. They no longer go outside to play in the winter. Commentator Paul Harvey is on the radio at 9 a.m. and noon. "Paul Harvey is very good," one resident told me. "This community is very Paul Harvey-oriented."

Except for the radio, the canvas building is quiet. Scott and I watch the pike being devoured, hunger suddenly eclipsing other intentions, and Showalter watches us. Showalter seems nervous; he is no longer amused. Why? He has lived in Washington, D. C., where he was a Health, Education and Welfare Fellow. He helped prepare the assault on Congress that created the Native Claims Act. In his recent application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the position of Bethel superintendent he was asked how much he was willing to travel: None, Some or Often? He put his check in Often. He has already lost one race for the state senate, and maybe he'll run again. He has been a director for Calista. I am beginning to wonder: Maybe the subsistence lifestyle makes him nervous. Perhaps it is too peaceful here. He has seen too much and touched too much of the other society; perhaps the rhythms here are too slow. "When [the children] come back educated they are no longer the same children that we once saw leave for school," said a publication prepared by a nonprofit organization that serves the Bethel area. "Some of them are strangers to their own people. But much worse, they are strangers to themselves."

When we walked over to the boat from the AVCP offices earlier this evening Showalter was quiet and slightly sad. He had just talked to his wife on the telephone and told her he was taking me out in the boat. She had not been pleased. "She does not understand," he said as we walked in the dust beside the road to his home. "She doesn't know why you have to travel and go to meetings to get things done." We bought five gallons of gas for the boat at a station festooned with plastic flags.

"You see," Showalter said. "I'm a person in transition."



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V. brooks range

In the early 1970s I received letters from the Brooks Range—from the Arctic. They came from a lake in the mountains and the only return address they bore was "Via Bettles Field, Alaska." I saved them all. At the bottom of each letter was printed the familiar quotation from Thoreau: "In Wildness is the Preservation of the World." Occasionally I would find the middle words crossed out with a slash of a pen, so the sentence more clearly expressed the writer's belief: "In Wildness is the World."

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The letters were from a man named Fred Meader and, later, from his wife, Elaine. I had met them in Los Angeles in 1971 where they had been showing a film they had made about their life in the Arctic. Wilderness living, they told groups of students in auditoriums and classrooms, was the answer to the nihilism of civilization. "The only life worth living is the necessary life," Fred said. "The cost of living in civilization is too high. Continual personal involvement with the necessities of life—food, shelter, fuel and clothing—is still the only way in which we may attain lasting meaning in life." To me, living in Los Angeles, his words were instantly appealing, so I got to know the Meaders. I corresponded with them, saw them again when they came down to refine their film—and each year told them that next summer I would come up to Alaska to see them.

Now, at last, I'm headed north. As we leave Bethel and fly out across the flat country, I think of Fred's words the last time I saw him, in a house near San Francisco: "There is no hope for man except that those few individuals go back and live that way of life so that when the catastrophe comes we may have some of that ancient wisdom." There was a sense of urgency in him; I can almost hear it: Before it's too late. Before it's too late! So now Scott and I are going to the Brooks Range, to the ultimate wilderness, to see the place Fred lived, and to talk to Elaine. Fred was killed last September by the propeller of an aircraft.

We fly north. Scott sleeps, head against hand against window. I feel immensely alone. The flatness of western Alaska rolls before us. There is one village of 50 Eskimos, 35 miles east. That is all. We fly across huge untraveled plains, swirled like finger paintings by oxbow lakes, oxbow muskegs, oxbow meadows. Black spruce mingle with alder and balsam poplar in shadings of light and dark, like cloud shadows. "Numerous small lakes," it says on the map, a message of despair from the cartographer. Nothing sinks in the permafrost; the lakes are splattered around like the pools on a tarmac playground 15 minutes after a rain.

Those who report being humbled by flight are expressing false modesty: you feel huge, miles at your fingertips, mountains beneath each arm. Up here I could splash through these lakes, kicking cold water and trout in sheets across the forests.

And then, below, the Yukon.

The Yukon. Two thousand miles. From the canyons of the Canadian territory that bears its name, across the lake-

Preceding pages: Scenes of Brooks Range

spangled flats of the north, where the Porcupine River joins it in a thousand meanders, down through the bluffs at Rampart, past the hills at Tanana, curving south at Koyukuk, rolling between marsh and sand into the delta country north of Bethel, turning north at last and fanning out at Alakanuk, Emanguk and Kotlik into that perfect gush of silt and channel that, from the air, makes a delta look so much like a cross-section of a brain; the Yukon is power.

Think of the others: The Colorado, the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Columbia. Where I live the Columbia is in my backyard. It is like an old man; it walks down concrete stairs to a striped umbrella by the sea; nurses attend it, stifle its every whim, dissipate its restlessness on a treadmill, coax it into gentle death. And the rest are the same, though the Colorado still lives in bursts, like a prisoner playing angry football in the yard, busting knees. They're gone. They are no longer rivers. You lie in them and all you hear is the whine of turbines and the creak of valves opening and closing as barges demand. The Yukon is alive, robust, powerful. There are 22 proposed wild and scenic rivers among the d-2 lands. They include only a few miles of the Yukon; the rest is open to development.

After a fuel stop in Galena, a place to which our navigation radio is drawn by the sound of a baseball game between the Chicago White Sox and the California Angels, the Yukon goes east while we continue north. Far up on the edge of things is the ragged gray profile of the Brooks Range.

The Brooks Range. "Gates of the Arctic." Robert Marshall, an early explorer, used the name to describe a portal formed by two peaks not far from the place Fred and Elaine Meader moved in 1960. Now the phrase embraces the range itself as the name of one of the d-2 national parks. If the bill passes, the park would contain about 8,050,000 acres, all wilderness.

"This is the last big chunk of uncommitted scenic country left," says John Kauffmann, park service planner for Gates of the Arctic National Park. "Since the first settlers came we have always had a wilderness adventuring ground in our country. It has run out; from now on it will have to be contrived. But I like to think, being an optimist, that with proper management somehow or other we can keep a little bit, that we can make this a very special place, where you save your money, think about it for a long time, and then, when you've been here, remember it all your life."

Fred Meader did not come to wilderness by way of Joseph Wood Krutch, David Brower or Aldo Leopold. His was a raw journey, through a more fundamental darkness. "We realize that urban man, with his messy instincts and his archaic beliefs of freedom, independence, self-reliance, dignity of the individual ... is essentially an anachronism," he wrote, his sense of nihilism pounding in his ears.

Meader, son of an A&P manager in upstate New York, turned to philosophy in college after his mother got cancer. It did not soothe him. Finally, after searching in vain for a place "to find a niche in this domestic culture," Meader wound up, at the age of 30, with Elaine and their baby boy, Dion, in the Brooks Range, on a homestead at the peak of a long lake. For five years Meader, his wife, Elaine, and their son—three when they moved there—nestled deep in a shell of isolation. But somehow, even in the wilderness, Fred Meader's restlessness was not slaked. He finally could not keep hidden the answer he had found. He had to show it to the civilization he spurned.

"The most influential thinker in my life has been Friedrich Nietzsche," he wrote once. "The writings of C.G. Jung and Rainer Maria Rilke have also been very important in building my philosophy, but none of these men have analyzed the domestication-civilization-slavery-wild complex. That seems to be my task."

Meader was caught: He was convinced that wildlife was the only life with meaning, but the drive to share this passion demanded that he leave the wilderness for long periods. A year ago, hurrying from one compulsion, the life itself, to the other, the life's message, he accidentally stepped into the spinning propeller of the plane that was carrying him away.

On the northernmost shore of a long and narrow lake, deep in the Brooks Range, a place of stillness and memory, where gulls sit in the tops of the spruce trees like flame on candles, in a cabin built by the hands of Fred Meader and his wife and son out of spruce logs and peeled poles and moss, an odd group has gathered, moths to the light of wilderness.

Here is John Kauffmann, Park Service planner, slender, reserved, intellectual, a respected pundit of modern wilderness philosophy; here's Ray Bane and his wife Dorothy, an affectionate couple, anthropologists for the Park Service. Ray is a wiry man in body and spirit, sometimes bluntly dog-

"This country's been so doggone good to us. Now it's time to be good to the country"

matic: "There *will* be no signs in Gates of the Arctic National Park." Here's George, a habitual distance hiker from Scotland, passing through on his way from Bettles to Anaktuvuk Pass, which is 90 miles by air and godawful long by foot. Here's Kip Kermoian and Suzi Lozo, who live a mile across the lake, both bright with some joy in each other that is so clear and unencumbered it must be new. Here's Barth Falkenberg, a slender, dark-haired reporter-photographer for the *Christian Science Monitor*, who is doing a series on "The Last of the Wild Places," and will be off tomorrow with the Banes and Kauffmann on a six-day canoe trip. There's Heather, four, sleeping under a tent of mosquito netting on the bed beside the Franklin stove, and Dawn, one, crying sporadically in the other room.

And here is their mother, Elaine Meader. She is thinner than I remember; she is 44 now; but her brown hair is just the same, wispy and slightly wild, her voice is as light as down, and her eyes are pale blue, intelligently dazzled, as if everything she sees is aflame. On the walls are all that are left of her men:

The Meaders: "The only life worth living is the necessary life"

Walter Hickel: The Spirit of Alaska

Walter J. Hickel left Richard Nixon's Administration in the rarest role that doomed organization offered, that of hero. He didn't earn it through his relatively good performance as Secretary of the Interior; he won it by championing the youth of the nation and by being fired. "I believe this Administration finds itself . . . embracing a philosophy which appears to lack appropriate concern for the attitude of a great mass of Americans—our young people," he wrote to Nixon in May 1970, and by Thanksgiving he was gone.

Now, the hero is battling to return to public life. On August 22 Walter Hickel apparently defeated incumbent governor Jay Hammond, a conservationist, for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. The vote—its very closeness a symbol of Alaska's divided sentiment on development—may yet face a recount. If Hickel prevails, he's likely to win in November.

Hickel is especially proud of his contribution to urban Alaska—his shopping centers, housing tracts and hotels. His office on the sixth floor of an Anchorage building whose tinted windows look like thin sheets of rolled brass overlooks the Captain Cook Hotel, the symbol of his headlong rush at life and business. Hickel started building the Captain Cook even before the echoes of the 1964 earthquake had faded, and that precarious decision helped Anchorage survive, and certainly contributed to his election as governor in 1966. It also was typical of his style, which is based more on instinct than careful study. "If a project felt right, I went ahead," he wrote in his book, *Who Owns America?* "If it did not feel right, I dropped the whole thing." One project that feels right to him is the exploration and development of the Arctic.

"Hey!" he says. "The most fragile thing up at Prudhoe Bay is not the environment. It's *man*! It's tough up there. Hey, it's survival! Those environmentalists don't understand what they're talking about. Nature is ruthless. She has no compassion. Hey! The only compassion this country'll ever have will be of people."

This was the drive of his primary campaign: Trust the people! Open up the land! Promote development! "A vote for Wally Hickel is a vote against d-2." Leaning on the fame he earned

with his Nixon letter, Hickel has demanded postponement of the d-2 decision. "Someone," he insists, " must have the strength to say,'No, Mr. President.'"

It seems strange coming from this man. When Nixon appointed Hickel to be Interior Secretary he was widely expected to be a conservation disaster. But after a year he had built a positive environmental image in dealing with problems like the Santa Barbara oil spill, a jetport in the Everglades and the whaling industry. This is the man who made a friend of a noted conservation writer, Michael Frome, then with *Field & Stream*. "He outdid the environmentalists," Frome remembers. "He made some wonderful speeches."

But today, in addition to opposing the d-2 parks proposal, Hickel says environmental controls stifle the nation. He advocates a rail line to the north slope of Alaska and to its western coast; he deplores the demise of the Kaiparowits power plant in southern Utah, which would have polluted several national parks; and he supports the Beirne Homestead Initiative, an environmental nightmare.

Michael Frome is disappointed. "At Interior, Wally had a lot of guts," Frome told me shortly before the primary. "But it is unfortunate that when he went back to Alaska he reverted to type. If he'd stayed away he would have been a great national figure. Now there's no doubt he's the candidate of exploitation. He's a great guy but I hope he gets licked."

Hickel offers no apologies for his apparent change of heart. "Some people think we will harm or even destroy this earth by using the God-given riches that exist here," he says in speeches. "They fail to appreciate man's built-in ability to adjust and innovate and rise to the challenges of each day. Don't try to tell Alaskans the world is running out of resources. . .The only way to solve the crisis we are in today is through production. Sure, there have been mistakes in the past, but they were mistakes of the heart."

One such mistake was a winter haul road from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay which Hickel conceived of in 1968 with typically instinctive enthusiasm, then turned over to his lieutenant governor for completion when he went to Interior. Carved rapidly by bulldozers, the road destroyed tundra, melted permafrost and, by summer, turned into a long strip of muck across the north. It has been nicknamed the Hickel Highway (and, by one opponent, the Hickel Canoe Trail), and it lies there—as it will remain for centuries—as a monument to the ease with which the Arctic can be destroyed.

But Hickel sees it differently. "Now we know what *not* to do," he says. "That's the story of mankind. We were pioneering. It opened up the country, provided us with a source of income, and proved that the day of the Arctic is on its way. In terms of history, future generations will call the Hickel Highway the Santa Fe Trail of Alaska."

A portrait of Dion, who drowned in this lake when he was 17, and a photo of Fred taken an hour before he died.

In the warm, amber light of the late summer evening we talk about the passion of Fred Meader's life, wilderness, while the thing itself, careless of our attempts to fetter it with theory, spreads out around us as huge and unlimited as the sea.

"This country's been so doggone good to us," Ray Bane says. "Now it's time to be good to the country. Alaska is going to develop; we are going to have more roads—you've got to have an economy—but there's some places where we should not compromise. We're talking about a national treasure out here—a jewel that should remain uncut." Bane talks hard; his rhetoric has been sharpened on some abrasive opponents. Kauffmann's style is mild; conciliatory in tone but not in substance:

"This is a spiritual matter," he says. "Not a quantity matter. We should not measure the importance of a resource on the basis of how many people go. It's the depth of the experience."

While Elaine drifts efficiently around the outside of the group, feeding us pike, lake trout, wild greens and a ham Kauffmann has brought, the conversation turns to the management of Gates of the Arctic National Park. Kauffmann's idea is that from the start, access to the park would be strictly controlled by a system of reservations.

"You would go to park headquarters in Bettles," Kauffmann says, "or you would write ahead, and say, 'I want to go up the Kobuk River.' The idea would be that the limits to that area would be established, so if there were already, say, seven groups in there the manager would say 'Sorry, that area is filled for this week. Why don't you go to the John River?' Our thought is that it will be like reserving an airline ticket."

George, the hiker, has been listening in silence, watching Bane and Kauffmann toss agreement back and forth. Now, at last, the only representative of the recreational public here, he speaks quietly but succinctly; his words fall like a stone into the soup.

"I would hate that."

Kauffmann is placid, unrippled. He continues: "Yes, that seems to go against the freedom of wilderness. The problem is, we're simply breeding ourselves out of that privilege. Roderick Nash expresses it: Wilderness is like a tennis court; it's expensive, everybody pays for it, everybody uses it, but they don't all get on the court at once."

Outside, beyond a netted window, through the thin trees, I see Scott far out in the lake in one of the Meader's canoes. There is still sunlight on the ridges; the lake is a very deep blue, and the slow dips of his paddle glow in it like fireflies in the dusk. A tennis court? I am assailed by images of small white dresses, sunshades and delicate sweat.

About 150 miles west of here, in a shed perched on the side of a knoll, several miles of the Brooks Range are stored in racks and racks of flat cardboard boxes. These broken cylinders of stone, two inches in diameter, have been collected and stored over four-and-a-half summers by a group of men to whom wilderness might better be described as the pot in a poker game: It's very expensive, everybody pays into it, few people use it and in the end it's gone. They're mining prospectors, for the Anaconda Mining Company, and the stored cylinders are core samples.

Some of the boxes are marked on their ends with fluorescent red spray paint: In these are bits of glittering, heavy stone that contains about 4 percent copper, 5½ percent zinc, 1½ percent lead and a polishing of silver, about one and a half ounces per ton. It's high grade, dense, valuable ore: The companies working in this 2,000 square-mile area—the Ambler Mining District—estimate the deposits to be worth about $6.4 billion. This district, which has been excluded from the current design of the Gates of the Arctic National Park, has been compared to the Jerome area of Arizona and to the Noranda district in Canada, both highly successful. Its underground mines could possibly support a city of 10,000 or more persons. These prospectors are preparing the way.

Early one morning I took off with Dr. Tom Smith, at 40 the camp's oldest prospector. It was a way of getting into the country I had never experienced before. One moment we were hunched in the belly of the machine, the whine and the thunder blotting out even thought, and the next we were standing abandoned on a high ridge five miles from

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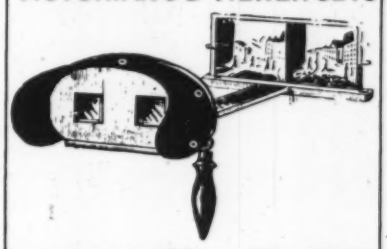

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camp, micaceous stone gleaming dully around us. I was almost out of breath, absorbed by the sudden beauty—drops to north and south; green and brown slopes, glistening water in the near valley, and a misty jumble of ridges and peaks hastening higher and higher north like a staircase into the sky—but Smith went right to work. He is a cheerful, quiet, matter-of-fact sort of person,

Up here at 2,000 feet, I could splash through these lakes, kicking cold water and trout in sheets across the forests

a geology professor in Fairbanks for most of the year, whose job here is to walk the country and map outcrops, helping develop a picture of the flow of the land.

Smith wore a small pack bearing lunch, bottles of acid test solution, and charts. He worked with a pointed hammer, chipping off bits of outcropping with the flat side, testing them, discarding them or occasionally putting one in a small white cloth bag. He worked with quiet pleasure: The land's shape was as he expected it. "Ah," he would say. "There's that micaceous schist. It's satisfying to find it where it should be." He would record the moment on a chart and in a notebook, in his fine, tiny hand. "No big surprises, just another hair on the elephant."

As he worked we walked high in rare and magnificent beauty. It was a morning like the best I have seen in the high mountain desert of Nevada: South, the half-bare hills, sleek with distance, rolled out into clear skies and sunshine from under an awning of flat cloud; in the smooth pale valleys lakes shone. Next to us a small peak rose in a clump of broken metamorphic rock; it looked like a stack of cordwood left to rot and tumble. North, there was a storm thickening; the peaks and the clouds mingled in a chaos of wind, stone and vapor. Even Smith, a pragmatic man, expressed an appreciation of the scene. "It's pretty country," he said.

We walked on. Smith was not a compulsive rock thumper. He did it only when necessary. We walked below a black, knobby monolith and he was moderately delighted: "Why, that looks like pillow lava." And he explained the theory of the area's construction. He said that the ore was probably laid down as part of the underwater eruption of an ancient volcano. In subsequent years layers of volcanic and sedimentary rock were laid on top of it, and then in the course of continental bumping and grinding the original layers were upended, twisted, folded and mashed as many as three times, changing not only the shape but often the very character of the rock. "The trick," he said, "is to back up through the overprint of the metamorphism and get back to the original bedding." Like taking an unfamiliar jigsaw puzzle out of the box, throwing it in a blender and then trying to put it together, blindfolded.

Smith opposes the creation of the Gates of the Arctic National Park simply because he doesn't think it has been adequately explored. Park proponents argue that most areas that contain mineral value have been excluded from the proposed parks; the miners argue that mineral discovery is no simple matter of aerial surveys and occasional backpacks. To them it is impossible to know from the limited work done so far by the U.S. Geological Survey whether or not the areas contain riches.

David Heatwole, the Anaconda camp director, had taken Scott and me on a helicopter tour of his drilling sites earlier; with everything airlifted in and out the only debris was a series of small terraces cut in the hillside, each with its invisible hole. The work seemed insignificant against the grandeur; from any distance the terraces were as hard to spot as low-cut stumps in a healthy forest. To Heatwole this kind of gentle probing, done in advance of pressing need for the mineral (copper prices are currently depressed), is better than the rushed exploration that could result from crisis. "Mineral deposits are so scarce," he had said, "that when you find one there's no question of what's the highest and best use of the land. Unless there's planned exploration now, when the time comes and we're in a war and short of copper, there are not going to be any rules at all. They'll say, Go look in Gates of the Arctic—and we're not going to do any helicopter drilling. *That's* when you get rape and pillage."

Up on the hill there were little rugs of lowbush cranberries. We walked slowly down a slope, Smith examining a ledge and I picking berries. When he paused at an outcrop of a layered, rotten rock that crumbled into slivers when touched, I got out my binoculars and found a bear loping across the valley about two miles south. And for a moment I envied Smith his job: How much more satisfying it would be to be tied to this land by profession rather than by play; to spend summer after summer working in it, developing that special sense, bred by initial training and years of practice, to feel where the long folds of rock go, where they bend and buckle; learning to see, like a surgeon in love with the human form, the bones, the tendons, the sinews, the ripple of life, beneath the surface. And, like the surgeon, to feel proud to be involved in the meticulous extraction of bits of the blood and tissue to serve human need.

But, sadly, that is not the reality of Smith's job. Where these men go, where they prick the ground with their little needles, there is always a chance of infection: The land will not be used with care and for necessity; it will be plundered and abandoned to feed our society's waste.

While we waited in a mossy basin for the machine to come and retrieve us from the hills, I asked Smith if his job ever gives him a sense of mystical unity with the forces that drive the earth.

"No," he said.

On a still, warm morning, Elaine Meader and I sit on the small beach at the head of the lake, talking.

We are sitting on a bleached stick of driftwood. Dawn is playing in the sand. She is naked, and the coarse pale grains stick to her bottom. Her blonde hair is in straggly curls, and her skin is lumped here and there by mosquito bites. Elaine waves in the air around her daughter to keep the bugs away.

"It's very difficult to talk about these things," she says slowly. "I think of the earth as not only an organism, but that it has a total spirit as an organism. It just can't take it anymore; it's too sick. Now we have this huge lesson we must learn: We just can't exist by ourselves anywhere—we've got to find a way the earth can become healthy or we're going to disappear."

All of the Meaders' life at the lake in the Brooks Range was spent trying to learn that huge lesson. Their attempts, interrupted by disappointment and tragedy, never ended. In 1971 I received a series of letters, describing one such attempt. Four people in their early 20s had moved to the lake to share the wildlife style the Meaders had by now refined to the point of eating almost no domesticated foods.

June 28, 1971, from Fred:

"These young people are as committed to the ideal of elemental living as any young person can be today, but they have many doubts and fears. . . Right now they are all having a hard time with the exclusive meat-fat diet, but good things are happening, too. . . You should realize you will not find an idyllic primitive life here."

July 16, 1971, from Fred:

"The all-meat diet has been too difficult for everyone except Elaine and myself and they have ordered some civilized food. . .Other problems have arisen and it is doubtful if all or any of the people who joined us will winter over."

August 1, 1971, from Elaine:

"Fred is on the mountain, sheep hunting—indefinitely. . . It has been an

unprecedented summer. What started as positive and full of promise soon broke down into depression. The commitment was too great for the others. . . These people came with some hope and a big dream that living with the country would be their 'answer.' The dream broke with the reality, and they felt this extreme could not be their answer . . . So yesterday, on a sudden decision, three of the people left. . .

"We understand so much better the extreme difficulties of this kind of choice, all the cultural imprinting we must move counter to, and how long it must take to grow into a relationship with the land that is *rooted* in value. Before these new values are rooted in us, we are in a no-man's land of depression and emptiness. The instincts and feelings that have brought us here are too weak to overcome the homesickness."

Wilderness: For two weeks of backpacking you lose yourself in novelty, freshness and the brash confidence developed by learning to take care of yourself for one night alone in the woods. The wildernesses we have enshrined in the lower 48 are kind places. Recreational wilderness refreshes, but when you *live* in wilderness it peels you back to the core.

"You bring everything with you," Suzi Lozo told Scott and me. "Any problems you have. They surface quickly. Here you don't have anything to shift the blame on to. Everything's right here in front of you."

Sitting on the shore I watch Scott out in the canoe. He stands in it like a heron, perfectly reflected. Until we got here he was a spectator in Alaska, interested in Admiralty, charmed at McCarthy, bored by Anchorage, offended by Bethel, shy among the prospectors at the Anaconda camp. Here he has slipped into the wildlife like a frog into a warm pond. He spends patient hours in the canoe, hunting northern pike in the shallow water or paddling across the bay to talk to Kip, who has shown him how

"I don't have to be here all the time to be home. It seems to be inside me now"

to set a rabbit snare and how to employ maggots to clean the skull of a moose. "I felt relaxed," Scott will tell me much later. "You couldn't get into no trouble there—there wasn't hardly any way for you to get in trouble. The people up there don't like cars, or big buildings. They like to see animals; they like to be by themselves, so they can think a lot better. When I get to be 18, I'm going back to live."

But while there is wilderness set aside for the tourist, there is no provision made for the wilderness life. Surely there is a need for places where machines are banned but not habitation, where one can confront, if only for a year or two, the unshielded radiance of your own life—to plunge wholly and gasping into the wild.

"Obviously, most people do not believe it is meaningful to live in a wilderness environment," Fred Meader once wrote. "Even the so-called 'wilderness lovers' would have us all think of the wilderness as a museum. But if a man's relationship to the wilderness is one of 'a visitor who does not remain', then his relationship is one of sentimentality rather than love, for love cannot exist without perfect intimacy."

Elaine is serene. The baby cries; she picks her up and hugs her, gently brushing the sand from her skin. Elaine will be leaving the lake soon, probably not forever, to study psychic phenomena in Berkeley. She thinks that perhaps a change in the human relationship to the spirit of the earth is coming, and "I would like to make a strong contribution to that change of consciousness." When the Meaders left civilization in 1960 Fred had determined that the only possible course was rejection of the civilized world; not long before his death he began to think the nature of civilization could, perhaps, be altered. "That was quite a change for Fred, for him to actually think that there was hope."

The beach is quiet. The ripple waves that break on the sand make just the sound of breathing. There are small clouds over the mountains to the south. In the tops of the spruce trees gulls rest. An Arctic tern slips past, a slender, whetted bird, on the way to a nest in the reeds. Dawn is at peace now, nursing.

"In the early years when I came up here I was really down, really despairing," Elaine says softly. "After living up here a few years and discovering the joy in very simple things, I knew that was the soul of things, that kind of joy."

Far out in the lake there is the sound of rhythmical splashing. Loons call to each other—one sounds like a cry, the other like a long wail. The splashing ends; they are airborne. Then three of them assemble in the distance and fly across us, long pale bodies with long necks, stretching forward as if passionately hungry for the rush of air, for the next moment of life. With each swift beat of wings each bird chimes gently like something light and silver. The strange, ethereal sound sails across us and disappears.

"I can go away now," Elaine says. Her voice is not much louder than the waves. "I don't have to be here all the time to be home. It seems to be inside me now."

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Just past Northway, at the eastern edge of Alaska, a long, straight path has been cut in the trees. In it lies the border, like an invisible track. We fly toward Canada, looking, looking for the line, and then suddenly it is there, *click*, shooting straight north across undulating forest, straight south to the mountains, knife edge of an uncommon land.

EPILOGUE
washington d.c.

In this instant I remember something Kay Fanning had said: "We're a developing nation." *Click*. The gate slaps shut, the line disappears, and Alaska is gone. Forehead against the window, Scott watches it go.

Down across Canada we fly, across checkerboard clear-cuts and steaming pulp mills, across Williston Reservoir, where wasted timber lies strewn at the upper end in square miles of rotting wood, logs lying crisscrossed like the matted hair on a dead caribou; down across the apple country of the Okanagan Valley, where cut hay speaks of summer; down, down, into the Idaho mountains, down to the city of Boise, where I trade 100 knots for 500 and recline in a jet; then eastward, where the deserts and mountains melt into farmland and then cities.

As the plane descends toward Washington, I suddenly realize, with the miles stacked dense behind me, that it is not a vast piece of Alaska we are talking about preserving here. It is a very small piece of the United States, a mere sliver of the world.

Today the future of Alaska is being determined in a high-ceilinged room paneled in goldish wood, room 3110 in the Everett McKinley Dirksen Senate Office Building. Here the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, chaired by Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) is debating Jackson's version of d-2, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Bill.

The room is crowded. I see several faces that are familiar to me: A native leader from Kodiak Island, the Sierra Club's Alaska representative, three staff members of the Alaska Coalition, some corporate lobbyists, a mining prospector I met in Anchorage, and Stewart Udall, former Secretary of the Interior. Udall's law firm represents the Alaska natives in Washington.

The session starts late. Yesterday the committee took a major step: it voted to allow oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Range, a place of refuge for the last healthy caribou herd in the north. The range, which would be expanded by the d-2 bill, is in the northeast corner of the state.

There is a map of the range set up against the far wall. A wrinkle in its plastic overlay reflects light in a vertical silver strand that seems to wind south from the range's north slope, where the caribou calve. It looks just like a pipeline.

"That's the very last piece of real estate on the North and South American coasts that has not been impacted by industrial man," Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus has said. "Whatever oil and gas is there would last for maybe a week, maybe two weeks, maybe a month at the consumption rate of the American people. Are we willing to trade that very pristine, fragile crown jewel for two weeks supply of oil and gas that might or might not be there?" The committee's answer is apparently yes.

Today Senator John Melcher (D-Mont.), a gray-haired, blue-eyed man who has the slightly stiff demeanor of someone covered with hair spray, introduces an amendment to prohibit all hunting in Alaskan national parks. He doesn't like the House bill's provisions allowing subsistence hunting. This, he says, would undermine the integrity of the whole park system.

"I think it is the intent of the bill that a legal resident of Anchorage can take two weeks, go into the bush, and qualify for subsistence," he says sternly. But Senator James Abourezk, (D-S. Dak.), long a champion of Indian causes, doesn't like Melcher's amendment.

"Any effort to prevent subsistence hunting in Alaskan parks is an attempt to limit the size of the national parks," he says, leaning far forward across the table, his long hair flopping on his collar. "This is a people's right to *eat*. I don't want to see that abrogated by this committee." The amendment is postponed.

Alaska's senior senator, Ted Stevens, sits at the far left of the table, as restive and irritable as a terrier on a short leash. The leash on Stevens is his advisory role; he is not a member of the committee, so his participation is limited to complaints and requests. Stevens dislikes the section of subsistence language in the House bill that gives the federal government a role in managing the wildlife on d-2 lands.

"The Great White Father is back," he snorts. "If you let the feds determine what the subsistence level is, that level is going to be so low nobody's going to hunt. Somebody here is going to tell the natives what subsistence is and we're going to see a change of lifestyle."

Abourezk leans forward again. "I would like to remind the distinguished senator that the natives are afraid that

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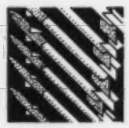

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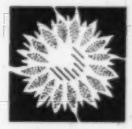

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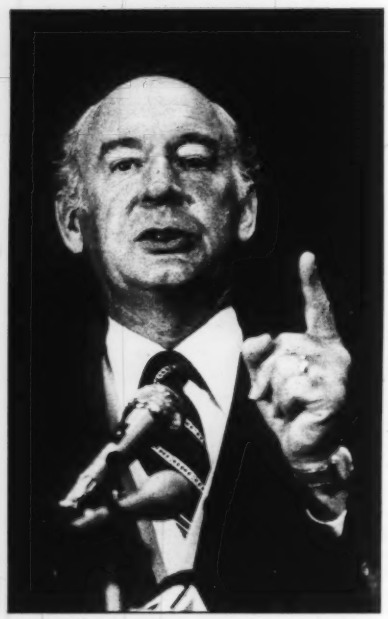
the state Fish and Game Department wants to tilt to sports fishermen and tilt away from natives. The natives *favor* the language."

Stevens snorts again. "Their *white lawyers* favor the language."

Stevens likes to picture Alaska as a poor state being assaulted by wealthy environmental zealots—he has complained that "this small minority group

"Are we willing to trade that fragile crown jewel for two weeks' supply of oil and gas that might or might not be there?"
—*Cecil D. Andrus*



with its great ability to raise money, its great ability to call forth propaganda efforts, is totally engulfing a very small state." Once during today's meeting he looks out at the crowd and says, "*My* friends can't afford to sit here day after day."

During a recess, I go to see the treasurer of the Alaska Coalition, the group which has done such a remarkable job of organizing support for the Alaska lands bill. The coalition includes about 40 member organizations, including such diverse ones as the Sierra Club, the Cousteau Society, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, Trout Unlimited, the United Automobile Workers and the United Mine Workers.

The treasurer, Cathy Smith, is tucked away in a second floor office in the narrow building occupied by Friends of the Earth. She is cornered by file boxes and other desks. She laughs at the notion that the coalition is wealthy. "We spent about $10,000 last year," she says. "This year we have spent $25,000. The highest salary we pay is $450 a month." That monthly salary, ironically, is about $50 less than the highest paid lobbyist for Citizens for Management of Alaska Lands (CMAL), a prodevelopment group, makes a day.

Smith points out eight speckled gray boxes containing 10,000 names of people who have written to volunteer to help the coalition's drive. Fifteen to 20 percent of these give money. "A lot of the older people say they'll never see Alaska but that they're doing it for their grandchildren," she says. "Opening the mail around here is a high."

The senators trudge slowly through the debate. At one point Senator Jackson caucuses his Democrats on the committee and tells them they'll have a bill out by the end of that week or not at all. A month later the bill is still in committee, still alive.

By now it is apparent that the major issue here is not boundaries but what they contain; acreage itself has become almost meaningless. Senator Stevens wants to designate much of the d-2 land national recreation areas, which would allow resource use; the Alaska Coalition wants to restrict development by making the lands official wilderness. In these matters and in others—minor items like the width of the land protected beside wild and scenic rivers, and major ones like hunting management and oil, gas and mineral exploration—the Senate committee has yielded in many instances to Stevens' desires. "We're greatly disappointed in how the Alaska bill has shaped up in the committee," said a Coalition spokesman. "We'll be pushing for strengthening floor amendments." In spite of the delays, the bill still has a chance for passage this year.

"Now's the time to resolve this and get on with it," Cecil Andrus says. "It's unfair to Alaska not to have a bill this year."

Andrus is a tall man with a high forehead, thinning gray hair and a suppleness that reminds you he is a fly fisherman. When I visit him in his office deep in the Interior Department's massive headquarters, he sits poised on the edge of his chair, his shirtsleeves rolled up, looking down at a map of Alaska spread out on the floor. There are paintings on the office wall of the Grand Tetons and of a polar bear, and far back in a corner behind a hat stand is a small nostalgic poster of Andrus's home state: "Idaho is what America was." Andrus sweeps his hand over the map. When Alaska was a territory the Secretary of the Interior was a god; now he's just another powerful bureaucrat. His hand glides over the d-2 lands outlined on the map and casts a shadow.

"Alaska is now in the position the rest of the West was in in the mid-1800s," he says quietly. "When we stood on the banks of the Potomac and looked to the West we saw an unending supply of land, water, grass, timber, wildlife, minerals. Up here—" he thumps on the map north of Fairbanks "—some people are still saying there's an unlimited supply. I submit to you that we have learned from our development of the West that it is not an unending supply, so we should utilize some of our experience and knowledge from the past and give some protection up there while we still have the opportunity."

There is another reporter in the room, who is about to depart on his own trip to Alaska; he asks Andrus whether he thinks the oil pipeline, now glutting the West Coast with crude, was a mistake. The hindsight question irritates Andrus. I gaze at the map. The boundaries of the Carter administration's d-2 proposal show more clearly than the terrain itself. The Yukon is a trickle of pale blue at the state's high waist. Bethel is a speck of black on a blue-splattered plain. The lake where Elaine Meader waits for fall and her departure is invisible in a pale rumpling that marks the Brooks Range. I think of Scott on the still water, so erect in the canoe, poised over the fish that became our dinner. "I wanted to live there," he said when we got home. "There was no electricity. You were free." Andrus leans back: No, the pipeline wasn't a mistake. He sips coffee from a delicate, gold-edged cup. The other reporter is finished. Alaska lies partitioned on the floor.

Is this issue a test, I ask Andrus, of our national attitude toward land? He replies slowly, very quietly.

"No, I don't see it as a symbol." He pauses, leans forward and stares down at the map. "I think that it is probably a philosophical determination of how mature a civilization we really are."

ALASKA CREDITS
Pages 18-19: Michael Parfit. Pages 20-21: map by Craig Bernhardt. Page 22: major photograph by Boyd Norton; others clockwise from top, Karl W. Kenyon/National Audubon Society/Photo Researchers, Tom Tracy, Philip Hyde, Gary Braasch. Page 24: Michael Parfit. Page 26: Michael Parfit. Pages 28-29: major photograph by Michael Parfit; others clockwise from top, Michael Parfit, Bob Ewell, Gary Braasch, George Herben, Robert James Langlotz/Black Star, Michael Parfit. Page 32: Michael Parfit. Page 33: Neal Menschel. Page 38: major photograph by Michael Parfit; others clockwise from top, Boyd Norton (2), Michael Parfit. Page 42: Michael Parfit. Pages 44-45: Michael Parfit. Page 46: major photograph by Steve McCutcheon; top by Scott Evans; bottom by Neal Menschel. Page 47: Michael Parfit. Pages 54-55: major photograph by Bob Ewell; others clockwise from top, Bob Ewell, Dennis Cowals/Black Star, Boyd Norton, Bob Ewell, Neal Menschel. Page 57: Bob Ewell. Page 66: Janet Fries/Black Star.

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Books/by Geoffrey Wolff

THE INDESCRIBABLE ONE: STILL UNDESCRIBED

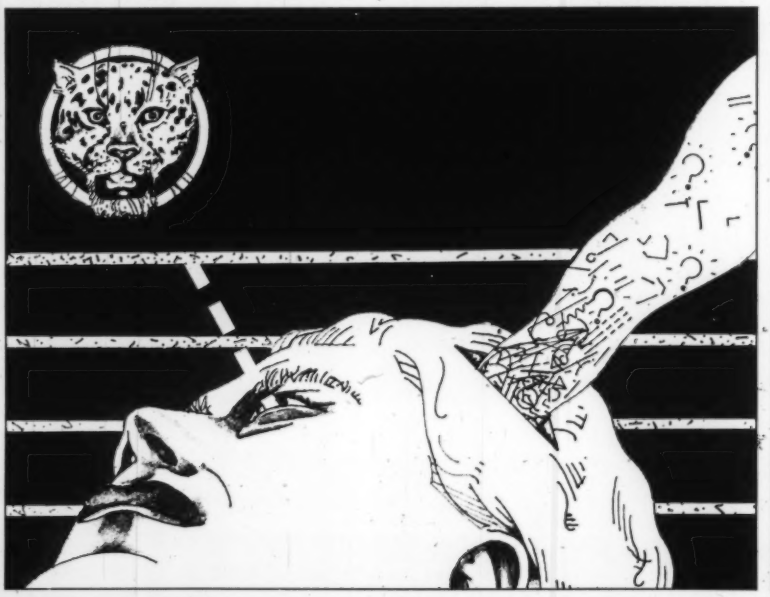
The Snow Leopard
by Peter Matthiessen.
Viking
(338 pp., $12.95).

The late Harold Ross, editor of *The New Yorker* (where much of this book appeared), is said to have told his writers that nothing is indescribable. Provoked by this challenge William F. Buckley, Jr. recently described, in a few succinct pages, the execution of celestial navigation, one of the most daunting of apparently incomprehensible mysteries. His book, *Airborne: A Sentimental Journey* (Macmillan), also encompasses the science of electronic navigation and its failures to please or to instruct, and here, Buckley seems to say, are mysteries that are indeed mysteries.

Buckley's wonderful account of a comfortable crossing with his son, sister-in-law and friends from Miami to Bermuda to the Azores to Marbella is, in common with the best literature of ocean crossings, a quest for the meaning of quality. Peter Matthiessen, as much as any living writer, has explored the high and low places of life, the edges, to comprehend the meaning of quality, to experience whatever extreme is offered by the gift of life.

Until *The Snow Leopard* he has been preoccupied by those aspects of life that are palpable. *Far Tortuga*, his novel of Caribbean turtlers beset by the sea, the wind and modern times, reduces its meditations to log-book descriptions of the workings of the water and air on ships, and on its characters. The book is a probe of the visible and audible and tangible world. *The Snow Leopard*, a true account of Matthiessen's 250-mile trek through the Nepalese Himalayas to a place he calls Crystal Mountain, is an exploration above all of interior regions, of Matthiessen's mind and faith.

Because Matthiessen is also a naturalist and an anthropologist (he would probably wish that I appended a disclaimer like *amateur* to his standing in these disciplines), *The Snow Leopard* is also a shrewd and scrupulous account of what he saw along the way with the zoologist George Schaller, from September through November of 1973. Schaller, whom Matthiessen had met on the Serengeti Plain of East Africa where both were studying wildlife, journeyed to the high mountains of Nepal to observe *bharal*, a blue-coated animal part sheep and part goat, and in hope of seeing another of the incomparably rare and beautiful snow leopards (he had seen one) that like to hunt *bharal*. He invited Matthiessen along, presumably because Matthiessen is a tough, seasoned and companionable explorer.



Matthiessen was no less eager than Schaller (known as *GS* in the book) to see a snow leopard. But his trek was of a different kind, and new to his published narratives of travel. It was observed by some critics of *Far Tortuga* that many of its typographical and stylistic innovations (much white paper, long silences) inclined toward Zen practice. And indeed Matthiessen has been a long-time student of Zen Buddhism, and the principal purpose of *The Snow Leopard* is to share the wisdom and history of that ancient and consoling faith.

Matthiessen has undertaken many times, with much success, to explain the unknown, the evidently indescribable. His range is extreme, from the customs and habitat of the great white shark in *Blue Meridian*, to the political and social complications of the movement led by Cesár Chavez (*Sal Si Puedes*), to East Africa (*The Tree Where Man Was Born*) to his wonderful novel of the Amazon, *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*. He tackles the inexplicable head-on, and always with respect. Zen, however, seems beyond the reach of his powers of translation.

At the high place of his trek, at that Crystal Mountain to which he had struggled to come, simplifying himself, reducing himself to a sentient and contemplative student of the enigmas, the Zen koans, he poignantly apprehends the probable outcome of his quest:

"The secret of the mountains is that the mountains simply exist, as I do myself: the mountains exist simply, which I do not. The mountains have no 'meaning,' they *are* meaning; the mountains *are*. The sun is round. I ring with life, and the mountains ring, and when I can hear it, there is a ringing that we share. I understand all this, not in my mind but in my heart, knowing how meaningless it is to try to capture what cannot be expressed, knowing that mere words will remain when I read it all again, another day."

That these are "mere" words is no doubt because they have been so debased by casual use. What is Matthiessen to do, having found his way to the

Illustration by Scott Berkson

center of his *spirit*, the *universe*, the "courage-to-be, right here and now and nowhere else?" He labors to locate specifics, just as anyone who has found faith or The Way or The Path labors to find The Word with which to bring, uncheapened, The News. Perhaps Harold Ross was wrong, perhaps there are indeed experiences if not things that are indescribable.

The labor here is the more moving because it was in part provoked by the death of his wife, a writer named Deborah Love, from cancer, not long before the beginning of the trek. They had been self-explorers together, using hallucinogens (after companion doses of LSD they left off a quarrel of long standing and embraced, becoming "*just the same, one mind, one Mind*, even to this: that as we held each other, both bodies turned into sapling trees that flowed into each other, grew together in one strong trunk that pushed a taproot deeper and deeper into the ground"), giving up drugs, studying the precepts and practices of Zen. Their life together was difficult, often quarrelsome. Matthiessen absented himself for long periods to collect materials for his books, and divorce was discussed, even settled upon. So he carried all this with him into the high mountains, together with the presence of his children and a deep sense of isolation, and an apprehension that his own death was near. There are glances, oblique but unmistakable, at the temptations of self-controlled death. These are repudiated, without ambiguity, for the consolations of self-controlled life.

The peace he finds (and then begins to lose, and then finds again) is here, beyond any argument. When Matthiessen, who has come so far to see the snow leopard, writes in his journal, "I would like to see a snow leopard, but if I do not, that is all right too." I know he means this, precisely. He says it again: "If the snow leopard should manifest itself, then I am ready to see the snow leopard. If not, then somehow (and I don't understand this instinct, even now) I am not ready to perceive it."

But Matthiessen does not leave the matter here. He is brave enough to share the experience of his perceptions, his satori, and here I believe the intractability of language, or Western language, or American language, shuts off the pass. He sees his hands as he uses them to climb an ice-field: "Simultaneously, I am myself, the child I was, the old man I will be." The trouble with these formulations is that however they might have felt, whatever rush of comprehension they might provoke in Matthiessen, on the page they are tautological, and edge toward the precipice of parody. This is the language of illumination; it is also the language of a *National Lampoon* parody of illumination. Matthiessen's Zen instructor sends him on his journey with a *koan*: "*All the peaks are covered with snow—why is this one bare?*" I think, I try not to think, I think of the Wise Man in the television serial *Kung Fu*: "Grasshopper, all the peaks are covered with snow . . ." In a scrupulous effort to explain his breakthrough into his faith Matthiessen records his first crucial illumination, the day after he understood, without having been told, that his wife was dying. First chanting and then meditating at a country retreat in New York, he was drawn into "a Presence of vast benevolence of which *I was a part*: in my journal for that day, seeking in vain to find words for what had happened, I called it the 'Smile.' The Smile seemed to grow out of me, filling all space above and beyond like a huge shadow of my own Buddha form, which was minuscule now and without weight, borne up on the upraised palm of the Buddha-Being, this eternal amplification of myself. For it was *I* who smiled; the Smile was Me."

There is much more about this experience. I concede life its inexplicable illuminations. I believe this was one of them. I simply do not know, by this language, what it was like, or what it meant. Like an orgasm, or the experience of death, I believe these things to be beyond the reach of language, even Matthiessen's language. Too much depends on the balance of opposites, on what seems to the untutored to be coy paradoxes: "I have the universe all to myself. The universe has me all to itself." Politicians and preachers, as well as *lamas*, use language in this way, fending off meaning with it.

But *The Snow Leopard* has virtues (in addition to Matthiessen's stubborn and courageous, if doomed, attempt to make his faith felt by others) that justify its study. If there is The Smile, there are also smiles. Matthiessen hunts smiles, perhaps for reasons of the spirit, and he finds them among the wayfarers who share this story with him. There are great adventures, great sights. There is, perhaps, a *yeti*, an elusive presence made substantial by Matthiessen's words. There are wolves, playing and hunting. A crippled lama gorgeous in his hospitality and isolation. The prickly, fanatical, faithful GS, who becomes a friend. And, finally, Matthiessen's most important mentor, a Sherpa porter, Tukten, who by act and example shows Matthiessen, and Matthiessen's lucky readers, a way to live well and be good. Not The Way, perhaps, but a way new to me. ●

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Movies/by Richard Corliss

AUTUMN REPRIEVES

Do you enjoy the spectacle of Chevy Chase and Goldie Hawn —who, between them, represent madcap TV humor of the sixties and seventies—turned into middle-period Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine? Then see *Foul Play*. Does the fifth incarnation of Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau make you want to run to your local theater? Then you've already seen *Revenge of the Pink Panther*. Is your idea of scary fun a movie about a homicidal maniac who kills people by perforating their eyes with ice picks? Then *Eyes of Laura Mars* is for you.

None of these movies demands or deserves much comment. If critics write long articles that, say, denounce *Laura Mars* as an icon of American glittermongery in the seventies, it has less to do with the Zeitgeist than with the need for movie reviewers to keep their engines from idling during a season of trashy, trivial movies. In the dog days of a summer that has provided only three amiable programmers (*Hooper, The Buddy Holly Story, Heaven Can Wait*) and one misunderstood, existential action movie (*The Driver*), anyone concerned with the American cinema has grounds for acute depression. And this goes double for critics. It's not just that there are so many inept or insignificant movies around, it's that they all seem to be the same movie. Now, much as critics like to see interesting films, they like even more to see films they have interesting things to say about. And what is there to say about the year's eighth adorable comedy, or the 14th rock nostalgia film? A critic becomes a form of specialist—like a proctologist—whose judgments run to little more than "yes" or "no," "benign" or "malignant." And sometimes, when he's asked about the patient and the symptoms, he just shrugs. Proctologists, and critics at the end of summer, are no fun at cocktail parties.

Fortunately, for critics (any proctologists in the audience will have to solve their own problems), the first day of fall brings the New York Film Festival. The Festival is valuable because it showcases two dozen films ambitious enough to force critics to have opinions, and strike attitudes; it also acts as the excuse for two dozen parties, at which critics can rehearse their next review, meet the directors whose films they're about to savage, and get a free meal. By the middle of October, we can all see the late-summer downers as a seasonal hazard, brought on by overexposure to summer movies—the kind that have nothing going for or against them but their cheerful triviality—and by the compulsion, every week or two, to be portentous in print. Come the autumnal equinox and the vapors are gone; critics can go back to being arrogant, Draconian dreamers.

Altman: From Nashville to nuptials

Usually, the Festival gives critics and patrons the chance to trot out their favorite spiels on an informal, itinerant "family" of Festival directors. This year, to be sure, Francois Truffaut will be there (with his new film, *The Green Room*), along with Eric Rohmer (*Perceval*), Claude Chabrol (*Violette*), R.W. Fassbinder (*Despair*), even Robert Altman (*A Wedding*). But, for a change, we'll all be challenged to invent a few critical bromides, because this Festival is showing more films by new directors than at any time in memory.

Who among us has a line on Zale R. Dalen, whose *Skip Tracer* proves to be a tough, intelligent, funny, *Canadian* variation on the American B movies of the seventies? Or Philip Noyce, an Australian, whose *Newsfront* is the most sophisticated "naive" movie imaginable? Or Michel Deville, whose *Dossier 51*—about the investigation a French CIA-type organization makes on a civil servant—is an absorbing "gimmick" film, in which everything seen or heard is purported to come from the spies' voluminous file? Or Errol Morris, who's made a weird documentary about pet cemeteries and petomaniacs, called *Gates of Heaven*? Morris, at least, has a mentor: Werner Herzog, the great and bizarre German filmmaker, who has promised to come to the Festival for the world premiere of *Gates of Heaven*, and eat his shoe.

The presence of so many new boys in the Festival class portrait, 1978, indicates two things: that some of the decade's Tiffany talents have become either predictable or silent, allowing room in the program for young hotshots with big ideas; and that the people who choose films for the Festival (I'm one of them) are eager to encourage directors who, with a pat here and a nudge there, may just become the Truffauts and Altmans of the eighties. The challenge is now passed to the Festival audiences: to give these unknown quantities and qualities a decent chance, by seeing the new work, arguing over it, becoming their own critics. Better we should have a cacophony of individual opinions on a movie like *Skip Tracer* than a chorus of smug shudders over *Laura Mars*.

A sense of adventure, an openness to new filmmakers and film sensibilities, should be an important part of the movie experience. We're in trouble if we just stick to brand names (Bergman, Fellini, even Woody Allen). In 1914, people didn't go to Chaplin comedies or Griffith melodramas because some solon said it was their moral obligation to see the latest works of these two great artists. They went because the little man in baggy pants made them laugh, and the virgin goddesses in Griffith's films made them cry.

Back then, of course, movies were about the only entertainment a working-class family could afford. The movies were there, they were new, they got you away from the house and out of your mundane life. Now, we've got plenty else to distract and amuse us; a movie has to be something special—at least something to talk about. What the New York Film Festival does is to provide a patina of social acceptability by making an event out of itself. You don't go to a movie at the Festival, you go *to the Festival*. So you're culturally justified in seeing a movie that otherwise you might never have bothered with—and in being surprised, angered, enthralled by what might otherwise have remained an obscure object of the filmmaker's desire. It's not a bad reason to see, or write, about movies. ●

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"Good Old Jomo"/by Charles Mohr

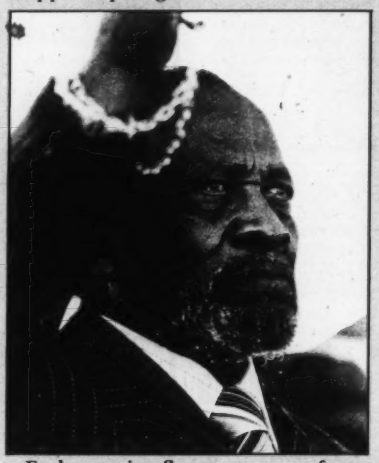
FINAL TRIBUTE

In 1952, the British authorities in the East African colony of Kenya arrested Jomo Kenyatta, convicted him of fomenting the Mau Mau rebellion and banished him to a barren, snake-infested detention camp in the northern desert for nine years. Kenyatta denied the charges but he symbolized what many whites saw as the specter of rising black nationalism. His name became synonymous with the loathsome oath-taking ceremonies and bloody terrrorism of the Mau Mau. A British governor equated him with "darkness and death." Kenyatta was born, after all, nearly 90 years ago, when explorers and missionaries were still pushing into uncharted areas of the African map. Many whites feared he would tear down the highly developed colonial infrastructure and return to Kenya what they considered the most savage aspects of African tribal culture.

They were wrong. Kenyatta was president when Kenya became a republic in 1964. By the early 1970s, halfway through a tenure that ended with his recent death, long-time British residents of Nairobi were calling him "good old Jomo." One of them observed that "if anything, we Europeans are better off than in the colonial days." And so too are most Kenyans. Kenyatta's admirers and critics alike had come to see him as perhaps the leading exponent in Africa of moderate politics, of laissez-faire economics and pragmatic hospitality to the white man's skills and capitals. The Kenya he governed is today one of the most de facto free societies on the continent.

In recent years, however, his reputation had become slightly eroded. Intellectuals and restless students complained that even if the economy had expanded, so too had the gulf between the rich and the poor. The masses gossiped about corruption, although it was mild by prevailing African standards. And twice the murders of potential political rivals of Kenyatta shook the national stability he sought to maintain. Nevertheless—perhaps because of a conservative inclination *not* to act—Kenyatta was a remarkably successful president.

Above all, Kenya worked. Perhaps the country and Kenyatta were fortunate that Kenya did not have the luxury of mineral wealth, which has tempted some African countries into mad extravagances and economic irresponsibility. The sophisticated and highly productive farms and ranches that white colonial settlers had developed had almost all passed into black hands. They remained productive and mostly well run. Kenya was the service center of Eastern Africa, providing insurance, banking, shipping and transshipped capital goods.



Each morning flowers were cut from gardens on the shore of beautiful Lake Naivasha and, along with fine vegetables and fruits that grow year round in the highlands, flown to market in London. Tourism came to rival coffee as the main source of foreign exchange as more than 400,000 people a year came to see the wildlife and the scenery. Tourism, like almost all of the economy, remained firmly in private hands.

Under Kenyatta, Kenya developed by far the largest black middle class in Africa and was virtually the only nation on the continent in which a significant part of that middle class derived its income from the private sector and not merely from the privileges and corruption of bloated civil services. Housing increased and the affluent neighborhoods became more and more integrated as black incomes rose.

Interestingly, all of this did not make Kenyatta a political hero in most of Africa. Few other leaders ever thought of emulating him; his influence was limited and he leaves behind no cult or movement. Pragmatism is not dramatic, romantic or pleasing to the crowd. Until his excesses became too great, Idi Amin of Uganda, with his swagger, was more popular with many Africans than the dour old president of Kenya. Amin quite literally wrecked his economy overnight by a mass expulsion of Asian residents—but to millions, even in Kenya, Amin's folly made him a hero.

To many leaders of the Third World, foreign policy has a nearly fatal fascination. But Kenyatta seemed to have virtually no interest in foreign policy. While a stream of denunciations, exhortations and tirades came from other capitals at frequent intervals, the Kenyan foreign ministry was usually silent.

A man with hardly any ideology,Kenyatta could hardly lead an ideological movement. In one strange way, the British who so disliked him in the 1950s were right about an aspect of his character. When—as he sometimes did—he felt threatened politically, Kenyatta did not wrap himself in ideology. Instead he clandestinely organized oath-taking ceremonies of loyalty among the fellow members of his Kikuyu tribe. Until his last breath he was, in fact, a tribal patriarch—in a pinstriped suit.

For reasons that baffled some onlookers he seemed to grow more and more acqusitive as the years went by. He especially loved land and acquired an unknown, but large, number of farms. Although Kenya was not, by African standards, a particularly corrupt country, Kenyatta tolerated unforgivable conduct by the women of his family.

His wife and daughter were clearly implicated in the trade in poached ivory and hides that threatened Kenya's great wildlife heritage. Profitable involvement in the charcoal trade denuded and eroded fragile forest land.

The old man became increasingly irascible in his later years. When an official gave him bad news about a loss of profits in a state-run meat packing company in 1975, Kenyatta whacked the unfortunate man over the head with a cane. A potential successor, Tom Mboya, was assassinated in 1969. Kenyatta may not have been involved in the conspiracy, but the conspirators were never brought to justice. Later, a charismatic, if demogogic, rival, J.M. Kariuki, was murdered and the evidence seemed to point strongly to members of Kenyatta's entourage. It was through excess that he missed greatness. But he was too judicious to tyrannize his people. And he left behind the soundest multiracial society in Africa. ●

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